

The **AUTHOR** & JOURNALIST

Formerly The Student Writer

January

1924

OR MILITANT NUMBER!

Closed-Shop in Filmdom is a Fact

By A. G. Birch

Why We Now Carry No
Scenario-School Advertising

A Defense of the American Tradition

By William MacLeod Rains

As the Editor Views Your Story

Get Your Last Line First

By Haves Lancaster

Literary Market Tips

What the Magazines are Buying this Month

The Barrel—Including Various "Scrappy" Comments

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THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S Literary Market Tips

Gathered Monthly from Authoritative
Sources

Charm, 50 Bank Street, Newark, N. J., is a new magazine to be published by L. Bamberger & Company, one of the largest department stores in the country. "It desires articles of from 1000 to 1800 words," according to the editors, "of interest to woman and the home—articles of the type used in *Good Housekeeping* and *Vogue* on domestic topics, fashions, women movements and society. Payment is on acceptance at 2½ cents a word or more, according to value." Apparently no fiction is sought.

The Smart Set, 25 W. Forty-fifth Street, New York, with its January issue, becomes an all-fiction magazine. Its former editors, Messrs. Mencken and Nathan, have taken the editorship of Alfred A. Knopf's new magazine, *The American Mercury*, which will be a magazine of general comment, at 220 W. Forty-second Street, New York. *The Smart Set*, according to its new editor, will feature the unusual in fiction. "Its policy has always been to welcome the newcomer. It has always sought quality, never names. Its aim is to print the best fiction available in the belief that its readers will recognize it as such." Short-stories, novelettes, and short fillers are used.

Garden Magazine, Garden City, L. I., editor, Leonard Barron, writes the following: "We deal constructively with the pleasure of gardening for the embellishment of the home. Also discuss intrinsic qualities and improvement of cultivated plants and the purpose they serve as landscape material. Our appeal is to a well-to-do group of hobbyists, who are able to indulge their fancy. Poems are rarely used and these few must be joyous lyrics of the garden; photographs are used. Manuscripts are reported on within one to two weeks and payment of approximately 1 cent a word is made on acceptance."

People's Popular Monthly, Des Moines, Iowa, Ruth Stewart, managing editor, writes: "There has been some change in our policy recently and we wish to write and ask you to take our name out of list B in your Handy Market List and transfer it to your list A. After January 1, 1924, we will be paying on acceptance, following about the same rate as before. Please say that we use very little verse. Most of our articles are especially arranged for and we can't use essays or plays. I mention these because this sort of material has been coming in to us frequently lately. We do like good all-around stories that reflect American life in its best."

The Kansas City Star, Kansas City, Mo., is planning to issue a new magazine in color, including several pages of fiction, art features, fashions, travalogues, Bible features, and a children's page. The new publication, it is stated, will make its appearance early this year.

Nature Magazine, 1214 Sixteenth Street, Washington, D. C., pays for articles within its scope on acceptance, according to P. S. Ridsdale, managing editor. "We generally desire articles of from 1500 to 2000 words in length, well illustrated, with from six to eight photographs. They should be written in simple language and in popular vein, so that a child of fourteen years can readily understand, and be interesting at the same time to adults as well. We pay for these articles from \$5 to \$50 according to their quality. We use very little verse and no jokes or anecdotes."

Standard Associated Magazines, who put out a number of mail order publications, state: "For every printed article a fair rate of payment will be made. We want only manuscripts pertaining to some branch of the mail order business or of interest to agents, mixers, etc. We pay for strength, not length. Make them short and to the point. No department editors wanted, and no stories, poems or formulas. Address letters, Editor, *Standard*, 1207 Lane Boulevard, Kalamazoo, Mich."

Popular Science Monthly, S. N. Blossom, editor, 225 W. Thirty-ninth Street, New York, states: "*Popular Science Monthly* is in constant need of brief illustrated stories that make up a large part of its editorial content each month. We are in the market for stories of new machines, processes and discoveries, time- and labor-saving tools and useful accessories for the home and automobile. Such stories should be interesting not only as news but also useful to the average man in the everyday affairs of life. For our larger articles we seek timely, non-technical accounts of scientific progress—stories which demonstrate how science and mechanics with their inventions and discoveries affect our lives—how they are actually applied in our homes. Practical, concrete, personal application is one of our chief aims. Material which conveys something of the drama and romance of modern science and mechanics is particularly acceptable just now. The *you* of the reader rather than the *I* of the editor or the writer is our first consideration. Articles should be well illustrated either with striking photographs or with drawings that can be adapted by our artists. No manuscript should exceed 3000 words in length. Everything submitted will be acted on at once. If suitable, a check will go forward at once. Otherwise we will let the contributor know promptly so that he can submit material elsewhere. In view of this promptness, we suggest that contributors submit their material to us first." *Popular Science Monthly* pays on acceptance, at 1 cent a word and \$3.00 for each photograph.

The Shifter, Charleston, N. C., has been discontinued.

(Continued on Page 32)

Prize Contests

Fiction House, Inc., 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, publisher of *Action Stories* and *Novelets*, offers \$10,000 in cash for story plots. J. B. Kelly, editor, writes: "We want story plots for our new magazine, *Novelets*. To keep its pages pulsing with the fresh, vigorous blood of real experience we are inviting you to send out of your personal experience or the life adventure of another, a story plot for a short novel—the kind you find in *Novelets*. It's the idea, the new twist of circumstance, which we are after. You can tell it in 500 words. For every acceptable story-plot we will pay \$50 in gold. We will publish your name as co-author with our staff-writer, who will write the action novel from your plot. You will be given the opportunity to complete the story yourself if you wish, and additional regular rates will be paid you if you write an acceptable novelet."

People's Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, recently announced that prizes of \$15, \$5, \$3 and \$2 will be paid for the best letters selecting the advertisement deemed best in each issue of the magazine and stating why.

Woman's Home Companion, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, offers \$100 for a "ten-word story," giving as an example the following: "For sale: A baby carriage, blankets and covers—never used." No story must exceed ten words in length; all stories must be mailed not later than January 31st, and no manuscripts will be returned. Address Short Story Contest Editor.

The Witter Bynner Prize of \$100 for the best poem submitted by an undergraduate in any American college or university, is announced again for 1924 by the Poetry Society of America. The 1923 prize was awarded to Maurice Lesemann of the University of Chicago for his contribution, "In the Range Country." Undergraduates in any American college or university may compete, and verse is not disqualified by publication; but not more than two hundred lines will be considered from any one person. Manuscripts should be type-written, should bear on every sheet the writer's name and address, as well as his college, and must be sent before May 15th, 1924, to Mrs. Edgar Speyer, 22 Washington Square, North, New York City, New York. The envelope should be marked: P. S. A. U. C. No manuscripts will be returned. Mr. Bynner's co-judges this time will be Leonora Speyer and Ridgely Torrence.

Frederick A. Stokes, New York publisher, has added \$100 to the \$25 offered by the General Federation of Women's Clubs for the best prose article, not exceeding 500 words, on the subject, "What Two Million Women Want From the Publishers." The prizes will be apportioned as follows: \$50 for the first, \$35 for the second, \$25 for the third and \$15 for the fourth. Manuscripts must bear name and address of sender; none will be returned. All contestants must be members of the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Winning articles become property of the General Federation. Contest closes February 1. Address Mrs. L. A. Miller, Chairman of Literature, G. F. W. C. Contest, 1528 N. Nevada Avenue, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Farm and Home, Springfield, Mass., Herbert Myrick, editor, announces a prize contest, totaling \$5000, divided into several prizes. The plan, it is stated, will be described in detail in the January issue of *Farm and Home*. The contest will relate to certain rural activities or best letters describing such activities.

The Drama League, 59 E. Van Buren Street, Chicago, announces that it will award a prize of \$300 for the best full-length play with a religious theme and \$100 for the best one-act play, also with a religious theme, submitted before April 1, 1924.

(Continued on Page 39)

The Photoplay Market

Goldwyn Producing Corporation, Culver City, Calif., confirms our current analysis of the scenario market. In a letter dated November 12 and forwarded to us by a contributor, Vivian M. Newcom, secretary to June Mathis, editorial director for the Goldwyn Corporation, states: "Miss Mathis has asked me to return your manuscript, * * * inasmuch as our present production plans only include stories and plays by well-known authors, which have a wide publicity value."

Jess Robbins Productions, 4500 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles, according to Jess Robbins himself, is "not at present in the market for scenarios, whatever their merit may be." Under date of November 14 he wrote to a contributor, apologizing for long delay in returning a manuscript, and explaining that this delay—which seems to have been the experience of numerous writers—was due to his extended absence in New York on a business trip.

Renalles, Inc., 6411 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, Calif., in a letter to THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, dated December 4, states: "This organization is seeking motion picture stories for immediate production. We will be glad to consider for purchase and production original stories of every type, either in the detailed synopsis form or in continuity form. Stories must have a definite theme, whether of the city or the country, of the sea or of the prairie. Animal stories, child stories, melodramas, comedies, society dramas, tragedies, are wanted. Particularly do we seek stories written around local incidents, local characters, local history. Should the story be big enough and the locale warrant it, this organization will film the story in the locality for which it was written. Opportunity will thus be given to local talent—writers, actors, technical assistants, to aid in a motion picture production without the necessity of journeying to Hollywood. Return postage on a self-addressed envelope should be enclosed with all stories submitted." This statement is submitted over the signature of Harry A. Swart, editorial director. Clark Renalle appears on the letterhead as president. The stationery bears the further cryptic statement, "We do what we say we do, keep faith," embellished by a reproduction of a winged sphinx. THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST publishes this statement as received, without recommendation. The street address, we note, is one recently associated with the Palmer Photoplay Corporation as the publication office of its students' magazine, *The Story World*.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST

Formerly THE STUDENT WRITER

THE AUTHOR'S TRADE JOURNAL

FOUNDED 1916

Published Monthly at 1835 Champa Street
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CONTENTS FOR JANUARY

	Page
Literary Market Tips	2
Prize Contests	3
The Photoplay Markets	3
The Closed-Shop Policy in Filmdom Is a Fact	5
By A. G. Birch	
Why We Now Carry No Scenario-School Advertising	11
A Defense of the American Tradition.....	
By William MacLeod Raine	15
As the Editor Views Your Story.....	
Anonymous	17
The Dilemma Contest	19
Wit-Sharpener for January	20
Get Your Last Line First.....	
By Hewes Lancaster	21
The Barrel	23

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CONTRIBUTIONS of superior interest to writers will be promptly considered and offer made if acceptable. Stamped envelope for return if unavailable should be enclosed.

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FIGURES ON WRAPPER show date to which your subscription is paid. Magazine will be discontinued at expiration of subscription period, unless renewal is specifically ordered. Act promptly in renewing or reporting change of address.

Entered as second-class matter April 21, 1916, at the Postoffice at Denver, Colo., under the act of March 3, 1879.

"You Tell 'Em; I Stutter"

THIS is, by all odds, the "scrappiest" issue that THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has ever offered to its public. There is the controversy about photoplay schools which occupies a lion's share of space. A scandal in connection with a prize story contest is in evidence. Comment concerning editorial policies toward writers takes its place in the "light artillery." A famous author's memory, assailed in another magazine, is defended in a capable and authentic manner in this one.

It would appear, therefore, from a table of contents that THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has a militant disposition. This is as true as the story of the man who so loved peace that he was "rarin' to fight for it." Certainly the "Author's Trade Journal" would seem, from the very nature of its domain, to be far removed from the lists of battle.

Yet THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has certain policies with regard to fair play. It also considers that, to maintain its integrity, it must deal honestly with its readers by way of giving them, so far as is possible, up-to-the-minute information on matters within its scope. Thus, while we are equipped for the pursuits of peace—and admire such pursuits greatly—neither are we too proud to fight. Fur, fur from it; we have some beautiful siege guns that have never been limbered or unlimbered and we have some gunners that are experts.

Perhaps, when the present engagement is over, there will be some bricks and bouquets strewn around. We, being utilitarian by nature, will use the bricks with which to build more strongly our present fortifications—or else throw 'em at some one else; and the flowers will be used to perfume the office, which is now strongly aromatic of tobacco smoke and gunpowder.

☆ ☆ ☆

DETAILED consideration of the scenario market controversy, which occupies so much space in this issue, knocked our schedule into the semblance of a battered cocked hat. Next month we expect to get back to normal again with the concluding article in Thomas H. Uzzell's series. It is entitled "Some Complexes that Inhibit Writers."

And Mr. Uzzell himself regards it as the most important in the entire series.

N. Bryllion Fagin, author of "Short Story Writing, An Art or a Trade" (published by Thomas Seltzer), and dean of the School of Literary Arts, Research University, Washington, D. C., has a most thought-provoking message for writers entitled, "The Silent Horde."

As a climax—our old friend and standby, H. Bedford-Jones, whose published fiction output amounts to close to a million words a year—will be in the table of contents again. Mr. Bedford-Jones has been living for the past several months in England, where he has been investigating the English magazines and their policies. The results of this investigation he places before AUTHOR & JOURNALIST readers in a valuable article entitled, "Selling in England."

The Closed-Shop Policy in Filmdom is a Fact

No Other Conclusion Possible as a Result of Thorough Investigation; Chances for Aspiring Scenarist Less Than One in Ten Thousand

By A. G. Birch

OUR December issue reviewed a startling report issued by the Authors' League of America. A painstaking inquiry by a special committee of the League apparently proved that the studios were closed to the work of "outsiders," and that of 42,020 stories submitted by unknown writers in a year, only four had been accepted.

We assured readers that unless we found reason to disregard these conclusions, after giving the photoplay schools and others fair opportunity to be heard, *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*—as an honest medium published for the best interests of writers—would close its columns against advertising calculated to create an impression of great opportunities in the scenario field.

It happened that our own similar investigation was well under way when the Authors' League brought the situation to a focus. For this investigation we were fortunate in securing a man in whom personally we have the highest confidence—Mr. A. G. Birch, who has achieved a reputation as a brilliant feature-writer and newspaperman, as author of fiction and photoplays, and who is now connected with a substantial chain of moving-picture theaters. Most important of all, he was bound on a mission to Hollywood which gave him entree to all the studios.

Considering his remarkable article which follows, in connection with the Authors' League report, we feel that only one conclusion can be reached.

THE next time you see an advertisement for some school of photoplay writing that encourages you to think you can write and sell original stories to the moving-picture producers—forget it! It's pure bunk!

If you are "taking a course" in photoplay writing, in the belief that you are on the road to seeing your name as "author" on a 24-sheet or in electric lights in front of some "two-bit opera," you are in just about the same fix as the fellow who is studying to become a doctor in a country where nobody ever gets sick. You're wasting your time!

To give you the sad truth without trimmings: there is no market for your wares. And anyone who leads you to believe otherwise is deluding you.

Who am I that dares to shatter your hopes? Well, I'm just one of the fellows who work in and for the movies. I used to write photoplay continuity ("scenarios,"

as you call them) for a living, several years ago; and now I work for a chain of theaters—selecting programs, editing films (to fit local tastes and censorship rules in many communities), planning advertising campaigns, and keeping in close touch with what the studios are doing. The firm I am with uses the "first run" stuff of the four largest producing concerns in the industry.

Very recently I went to Hollywood to get into closer touch with the producing end of the business, and to renew acquaintances in the studios. My way into the studios was cleared by peremptory letters from the "big bosses" in the home offices in New York. I was enabled to learn exactly what I wanted, from the "inside." And one of the things I wanted was an honest answer to the question that *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* had asked me to investigate: *Are the studios buying unsolicited stories from unknown authors?*

I got the answer—straight from the shoulder, in emphatic language: “No!” Over and over—everywhere—“No!”

Your chance of “breaking in” with a script isn’t one in ten thousand. Not because the studios don’t want good stories, but because natural conditions within the industry make it practically impossible for anyone outside to supply them with what they want. To be entirely frank about it: very often the producers themselves don’t know what they want—and the last thing on earth they would do would be to take a chance on a story which *you*, an unknown person, offered them.

Of course there are exceptions to this rule—as there are in every other thing in life. Occasionally you *do* hear of an unknown writer landing a story. And the photoplay schools make a tremendous fuss over this. But such a windfall doesn’t occur once in 10,000 cases. And usually, when it happens, the production is made by one of the smaller, “fly-by-night” companies, and doesn’t amount to a hill of beans. It simply never is heard of in the industry. You don’t see Paramount or any of the other really important concerns putting money into the work of unknown writers.

Here is about the way the scenario-selling business stacks up—from a painstaking and unbiased study of the situation in all the leading, and many of the smaller, studios:

MOVING-PICTURE production, like all other branches of the theatrical business, is the greatest gamble on earth. *Nobody* knows what the public will pay for at the box office. Almost any sort of “small” picture these days represents a “negative cost” (the actual cost of the completed film) of \$350,000. To this sum must be added a like amount for distribution—that is, the handling through the film “exchanges” in many cities to the theaters. Thus, three-quarters-of-a-million-dollar pictures are really at the bottom of the scale, under present conditions.

Now, the gentlemen who finance and control the making of moving pictures are hard-headed business men. They have to be, or they wouldn’t be making pictures. They take as few chances as possible. And one of the first things they bank on in planning a production is getting a story that has *an already established and definite value with*

the public. That, they figure, reduces their gamble considerably.

A story of “established value,” naturally, is one that is known to the public for its hit as a play on the speaking stage or as a published novel or magazine romance. “The Covered Wagon” or “West of the Water Tower” or “Tiger Rose” had a definite interest in the minds of millions of persons before it was even considered for photoplay production. People who have read these stories or seen the play will naturally say, when the films are shown: “Let’s go to see that!” Or they will tell their friends what good movies those stories ought to make.

With this condition existing, why should any hard-headed business man pass up books like “The Covered Wagon” or “North of 36” and gamble his stockholders’ money on unsolicited manuscripts such as “The Fiddler of the Mountains” or “Yours Sincerely,” by John Jones, of Durango, Colorado, whom nobody ever heard of?

Ever suppose Mr. Jones’s “The Fiddler of the Mountains” proved, quite unexpectedly, to be a whale of a yarn—even better than “The Covered Wagon”—who would ever *know* it was good? Certainly not the 16,000,000 people who go to the movies every day in the United States. It would take a million dollars, added to the cost of production and distribution, to tell the public that Mr. Jones’s story was good—and then, very likely, the public wouldn’t believe it.

“No, thanks!” says Mr. Zukor or Mr. Lasky or Mr. Goldwyn. “I’ll stick to Emerson Hough or George Ade or Booth Tarkington!”

“But,” you may ask, “how are the new writers ever going to break in, to take the places of these famous authors when they are gone?”

The answer is simple: They are going to become famous outside of the movies—as *writers or playwrights*—first; and then the scenario editors will be bidding for their wares.

THE studios *do* say they read manuscripts and are on the lookout for original stories. But that is mostly press-agent bunk. I know; I’ve written enough of it to merit hanging or burning at the stake. Some studios *actually do* look over the mass of unsolicited junk that is submitted. It is pretty hard to explain *why*. The “readers” in these

scenario departments all confess that they still retain (*for some peculiar reason*) a lingering hope that someday they *may* find a jewel of a story that can be used, and that will reflect credit upon their sagacity in discovering it.

All the larger studios maintain reading departments. Sometimes one person, sometimes several, are employed here. The readers go through every new novel that is published—at least, those whose authors are famous, or that give signs of good sale. If the book seems to have a germ of an idea for a picture—even though the plot may have to be greatly altered and worked up from a new angle—the reader makes a 150- or 200-word synopsis of the story, with suggestions and a report, and hands this to the production manager, or the scenario editor, or the general manager—whoever is the “big boss” of such affairs at that particular studio.

The same is done with magazines—particularly those that specialize in stories of plot and action. Stories that seem to have picture possibilities are clipped, summarized, reported on, and passed on to the boss. This official—usually a mighty keen chap, who has been a successful author or stage playwright himself—selects what material he thinks offers genuine possibilities, and then thrashes the matter out with the financial heads of the concern.

Unsolicited manuscripts that pour into the studios are looked over by these same readers. Few are really read from beginning to end. The reader usually can tell at a glance, from the mere appearance of a manuscript, whether it is worth a whoop. The experienced writer knows how to put his work up in professional form, and how and to whom to address it. The hopelessly green “boob” makes a mess of it. The reader glances at the first page or so. If something there arrests attention and suggests possibilities, the middle and end of the story may be looked at. If interest still is held, every word of the manuscript is gone over.

These readers are not “dubs.” They are trained to their jobs. They know a good story when they see it. (But whether it will still be good after it is translated into action on the screen, and whether the public will say it is good, are vastly different matters!) Rest assured that no really first-

class yarn gets by them. Even though they know that it is virtually a hopeless job to get the unsolicited story of an unknown writer produced, the readers are more keen to find good stories in their mail than you are to sell them.

The cold truth of the matter is that the would-be screen writers have fallen down with a sickening thud. They haven't been able to deliver the goods. Some of the big studios have virtually quit reading unsolicited manuscripts. The biggest producing concern in the world, Famous Players-Lasky (Paramount), has just about given it up as a hopeless job—although it doesn't advertise this fact. Thomas H. Ince has openly announced that he doesn't want any more manuscripts sent him, except from really important writers of the country who may feel they have a story better suited to the screen than to a book.

As nearly as anyone can estimate, there were between 48,000 and 50,000 unsolicited manuscripts sent to the studios of Hollywood last year.

And, as definitely as I could find out, only *four* of these were produced! And none of the four obtained a production from a really high-class concern.

QUITE recently a student-writer publication that is fostered by one of the leading schools of photoplay writing printed a list of moving pictures just completed, or then in process of production, that were from “original stories, written directly for the screen.” The list was long. It was imposing. And, though the magazine didn't specifically say so, it left the inference that all these stories were unsolicited manuscripts that had won their way to production solely through merit. Thus the “young hopeful” was led to believe that the market for photoplays is splendid.

Yet, as I personally happened to know, *every author in the list was an old-timer in the scenario business*, who broke into the studios in the golden days when the breaking was easy; and *every one of those pictures listed was written to order*, as part of the writer's regular work on the studio's own staff, or was bargained for because the writer had been a member of the studio staff and was known to be a professional writer or playwright of “sure-fire” ability! Not one of those stories was sent in, as you

would have to send *your* story, in the mere hope that it would "catch on."

One of the leading schools of photoplay writing recently submitted to *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* a list of photoplays which its students had sold to producers. I looked over the list. About half of the stories mentioned were one- or two-reel comedies. Many of them had been sold a good while ago, when conditions were different. And, knowing the methods of the comedy companies as I do, I am reasonably certain that the companies bought chiefly an *idea* in the stories (at a low price), and worked the idea up into their own form of comedy. Out of the entire list were *only two* feature pictures that I had ever heard of—and, as I have said, it is my daily business to keep in the most intimate touch with the productions of all the firms in the business. The rest of those "features" were, admittedly, sold to small concerns that probably never can get them "released" to theaters, even if the pictures are made. And of those lucky *two*, one was sold personally to a director who is now dead—so the story probably never will see daylight (or arc light).

That list meant absolutely *nothing* as an honest, dependable criterion.

Filling most of the space in lists of "original stories, written directly for the screen," are invariably the names of Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris, Avery Hopwood, H. H. Van Loan, Edmund Goulding, C. Gardner Sullivan, Sada Cowan or Olga Printzlau. But, remember this: not one of these writers is an "outsider," who had to sell his or her script by submitting it haphazard to scenario editors.

Thompson Buchanan, Elmer Harris and Avery Hopwood have all been famous stage playwrights. All three have been directly employed on Famous Players-Lasky's scenario staff. Mr. Van Loan had a big reputation as a writer before he began working for the studios. C. Gardner Sullivan is a member of Thomas H. Ince's scenario staff. Mr. Goulding, Miss Cowan and Miss Printzlau are old hands at the game, "insiders," who have been on various studio staffs for years.

"But," you may say, "*they* all had to break in sometime! Why can't I do so, too?"

I talked to a lot of successful continuity writers at the Hollywood studios about that. Some of them were young women whose

very youthfulness would seem to offer encouragement to other beginners—such writers as Winnifred Dunn and Bess Meredyth at the Metro lot. What Miss Dunn told me was echoed, to the last word, by all the others.

"If I were trying to break into this business today," said Miss Dunn, "I wouldn't have the faintest idea how to go about it. I can't see where I would have a chance on earth. I started when I was in high school—in the days of one- and two-reel pictures. The business was new. Studios were seeking more scenarios than they could find. Everybody had a chance. I tried my hand at it. I wrote many stories, and sold very few. But I kept at it. My average of sales gradually increased. Finally, after I got through high school, I had learned enough about continuity writing to get a job on a studio staff. I kept at it ever since, and just naturally grew up with the business. I couldn't dream of stepping out, as a beginner, today and attain my present position."

But occasionally a new writer *does* land on some studio's staff. How did he get there?

Well, in virtually every such case the newcomer is anything but a newcomer. He, or she, has been in the picture business a good while, working slowly toward continuity work as a goal. These new writers are virtually all recruited from the publicity departments of the studios. Young men and women with practical newspaper training want to become continuity writers. They go to Hollywood and find they can't get in. Then they rustle jobs on newspapers—working for anything sufficient to keep them alive. From this vantage point they begin to haunt the studios, building up circles of friends, and getting their names on the waiting list of applicants for jobs in the publicity departments. In time they become assistants in the publicity work. They stay at this several years, all the time getting themselves "in solid" with the members of the scenario department and the studio officials. Some of the continuity writers give them friendly help in the study of writing. If this "practice work" shows ability, the scenario chief will eventually let them "try out" on a small story. If this proves good work, they may get the first position that becomes vacant on the scenario staff.

The publicity departments in Hollywood are full of such ambitious young men and women. They—and not the “outsiders”—will be the continuity writers of tomorrow.

BEFORE long you are likely to hear a good deal through publications friendly to the photoplay schools about Willis Goldbeck. Mr. Goldbeck is the young man who wrote the continuity for Rex Ingram's production of “Scaramouche,” one of the biggest pictures of recent years. This was Mr. Goldbeck's first continuity.

But Willis Goldbeck is not a newcomer at all. He went through the same long and heartbreaking struggle as the rest of the press agents to get on a studio's publicity staff. He is an exceptionally brilliant and cultured young man, and Rex Ingram finally took a liking to him. Goldbeck was transferred from the general publicity staff at Metro to Mr. Ingram's own publicity department. In his spare hours he practiced writing continuity. When Mr. Ingram was working on a continuity, he sometimes let Goldbeck “sit in” with him and offer suggestions. Gradually Goldbeck picked up the work and Mr. Ingram's methods of handling a story. When Sabatini's novel, “Scaramouche,” was to be adapted, Ingram and Goldbeck worked it out together—and Rex Ingram generously gave all the credit for the continuity to Willis Goldbeck.

So don't let any “school hokum” lead you to believe that Willis Goldbeck was a rank outsider, who suddenly broke in and got his “first continuity” over big.

I do not mean this article, however, to be a tirade against the schools of photoplay writing. I am simply trying to discourage the idea that students are likely to find a ready market for their scenarios, or that they may readily break into a studio's staff.

What can be learned, may be taught. Photoplay writing is a business, or a profession. Its rudiments must be learned. Some schools may help you to master dramatic analysis and play construction. With these principles of playwriting once acquired, naturally your progress will be faster. If you are then sufficiently determined to go through the years of waiting to get into a publicity department, and then through the other years of waiting to get on the scenario staff, you may finally make good to the fullest extent.

And, having acquired a knowledge of the rudiments of your craft, there is another way in which you may possibly break into the game—if you are living right “on the ground” in Hollywood. It's this:

There are always numerous directors and actors out of jobs in Hollywood. Some of them are none too scrupulous. So, in order to live, they work up what are called “promotion” pictures. Los Angeles and its surroundings are full of wealthy retired men. Most of these fellows have heard vaguely of tremendous fortunes made in the moving-picture business.

A promoter will scout about until he runs across some such retired man. He will induce the newcomer to finance a film production—maybe several men, with time and money hanging heavy on their hands, will form a little group to finance a picture.

Now, ninety-nine chances out of a hundred, that picture hasn't a ghost of a show to be sold to a distributing company when it is finished. It isn't made to distribute. The director and some of his out-of-work actor friends are principally interested in drawing fat salaries while the film is being made.

But a story and continuity must be had. It doesn't have to be a particularly good story or continuity, because nobody is going to see the picture—except the gentlemen who financed it. So, if none of the promoter's continuity-writing friends happen to be looking for jobs at that precise moment, *you* may, with your limited experience, your intense ambition, and your being Johnny-on-the-spot, get an opportunity to write the script for the production. And, whether the picture goes to the warehouse or not, you've got valuable experience in doing the actual work.

THE schools, in publishing lists of “original stories, written directly for the screen,” are prone to include scenarios that were written by staff men or professional “free lance” workers as “potboilers” for producers. Here is a case that came to my attention in Hollywood:

A certain producer spent more money than usual on big “sets” for a sea story that he had adapted from a famous stage play. Then he descended to a trick that is deeply despised throughout the length and breadth of the picture colony: he made a “cheater”

picture with those sets. That is, he had one of his staff writers grind out a "potboiler"—the merits of the story cut no figure—employing those same lavish settings; and he hired an inexpensive cast of actors to make the thing. Thus he got two pictures from one series of "sets."

But I notice that the cheap "potboiler" which that staff man wrote under those circumstances has been included in a published list of "original stories, written directly for the screen"!

Several seasons ago my attention was called to the fact that a famous Western star wanted to "change his line," just for variety, and do a sea story, or an army story or an airplane story. He was having difficulty in getting just what he wanted. I happened to have a sea story in mind that offered plenty of vigorous, he-man action of the sort this star revels in. I worked it out and submitted it. It was rejected. Then, in due course, the star appeared in another Western—which, lo and behold! proved to be my identical yarn, switched around to take place on a desert, instead of upon a ship. And I had to exhibit this film!

But the reason I have cited this instance is that this very Western picture, written by the studio staff man with the full knowledge that it was a "steal," was afterward included in a published list of "original stories, written directly for the screen"!

Every studio buys many more stories than it ever can use. There was every intention of producing the story when it was purchased, but many factors within the industry cause a change of heart before production can be started. I was told at the Ince studio that Mr. Ince has fully \$150,000 tied up in stories that have been discarded. While I was there, Mr. Ince paid a fancy price for the screen rights to a famous English stage play. A few days later a conference of the scenario staff was held, and it was decided that the story would never interest American audiences. So the piece was definitely shelved.

Questions of expediency within the industry itself complicate the matter of photo-plays more than any outsider can dream. A good story alone isn't always the only requisite of production. A high-salaried and influential star may simply refuse to appear in some really fine story—and then turn

round and insist upon being featured in some piece of junk that gives her a "fat" acting part. Or the requirements of innumerable censorship boards may cause a good story to be sadly altered—and spoiled. Or production may have actually started upon a picture, when some rival producer announces that he has just done a story of very similar plot. The company that is just starting production has to alter its yarn to get away from the lines of the other fellow's film. Or it may stop production and hold the story up for a year to two—or shelve it altogether.

When some big concern like Paramount produces an original story by George Ade or Booth Tarkington or John Galsworthy or Elinor Glyn, don't fool yourself that such a story was ever written on the mere chance of selling it to the movies, and that the author peddled it to the scenario editors as he peddles his magazine fiction. The producer decided that he wanted a story from a "sure-fire" writer of tremendous reputation; and he sent an agent to see George Ade or Booth Tarkington or the others. He was willing to pay a terribly stiff price to get it, and the agent was equipped with a signed check to back up his argument.

The consensus of opinion from all the scenario writers I talked with was this:

IF you want to break into the movies as a writer, the best way to go about it is the roundabout way through the magazines and novels. First master the writing game, so that you can sell your stuff to magazines or book publishers. If you land a story that you think has picture possibilities, clip a lot of copies of it from the magazine and send them, simultaneously, to all the studios that handle that type of productions. The fact that the story has been published, and has a certain following with the public, will influence the buyer's judgment—if he just happens at that moment to be looking for a story of that particular type.

But the chances are that by the time you have learned your business well enough to sell steadily to the magazines you will be making money enough to turn up your nose at the "beginner's" salary you might make as a member of some studio's scenario staff.

Why We Now Carry No Scenario-School Advertising

*Some of the Photoplay Institutions Are Deserving of Support in
Their Efforts; But Their Advertising Tends to Give a
False Idea of Opportunities in the Field*

A Statement by the Editor

THE preceding article by Mr. Birch seems to answer fully the question, "Are the producers clamoring for new screen talent?" It is a concise report by a trained observer who has had unusual opportunities for investigation, and it covers up-to-the-minute conditions governing the selection of photoplay material. It substantiates the report of the Screen Writers' Guild committee of the Authors' League of America, from which we quoted last month. It also substantiates the earlier assertions of Roy L. McCardell, New York newspaperman, published in this magazine.

It must be confessed that we published Mr. McCardell's assertions half skeptically, chiefly to stimulate discussion and bring the true facts to light.

The more deeply we go into the subject, however, the more evident it becomes that the studios are practically closed to the new writer.

In the infant stages of the photoplay industry, original stories—one- and two-reelers for the most part—were eagerly sought by the producers. The editor of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST sold a number of them when the prevailing prices were from \$15 to \$25 a story. The day of the one- and two-reel picture passed and prices began to stiffen. Five-reel feature stories began to sell for prices up to \$500 or even more.

That was the golden age for the scenario schools and selling agencies. They were training writers and their students were selling their work. Alluring advertisements went forth, broadcasting their stories of success. A furor of scenario writing swept the country.

Then, so gradually and unostentatiously that its presence has only of late been seriously considered, the present "closed shop" policy of the producers came into being.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has taken no stand in this matter, except the stand of trying to present the truth. It would please us to discover that there is sufficient demand for original screen stories from new writers to justify them in devoting their energies to that form of composition. The few originals of this type that can be instanced among recent productions do not seem to us sufficient. They are the exceptions to the rule. Upon analysis it usually is found that exceptional circumstances surrounded the "breaking in" of the unknown writer.

For example: Only a few hours before these lines were written, word was brought to us that

a Denver amateur—a man of wealth whose hobby was the screen—had received an acceptance for an original scenario from the most famous individual producer in the country.

Hope was kindled within us. It sounded like definite proof that the outsider could get a hearing—that his ability to sell depended only upon his ability to "deliver the goods." But further investigation revealed these facts: The Denver man and the great producer had been lifelong friends. The producer had expressed his willingness to read any play his friend might write and to arrange for its production if he deemed it worthy. He had rejected many plays, but the amateur was persistent, a hard worker, and evidently endowed with creative genius. As a result, his efforts were finally crowned with success.

This play, if produced, can safely be proclaimed an "original" by an hitherto unknown writer. But is it fair to arouse the hopes of writers less favored in their friendships by making them think they have an equal opportunity to make good? We think not.

It is true that only by dint of cultivating his natural ability was this man able to grasp his opportunity. He neglected no means toward the attainment of his purpose. We happen to know that he took advantage of the training offered by the Palmer Photoplay Corporation—although the accepted scenario had been declined by the Palmer sales department on the ground that the expense of production would be so great that no producer would undertake it.

We know of another instance in which the wife of an established producer was able, through training and instruction, to write a photoplay acceptable to her husband. Here again the circumstances and the opportunity were unusual. Mr. Birch has instanced other cases.

The photoplay industry, in other words, does not seem to offer a field in any way analogous to the magazine field, wherein any fiction-writer may sell to practically any suitable publication, if his work is up to standard.

Photoplay Advertising Eliminated

IN this issue, THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has eliminated all advertising of the scenario schools and selling agencies.

Why?

We have taken the step deliberately and after most thorough investigation, because it now ap-

pears to us that any other course would be unfair to our readers and to the advertisers themselves.

It is not to be denied that this policy involves an appreciable sacrifice in revenue, the more so in view of the fact that the field from which a magazine of this class may draw advertising is extremely limited. At the very least, then, our action must convince readers of our sincerity.

Refusal of these photoplay advertisements does not constitute a charge of fraud against any of the institutions involved. It means that we cannot conscientiously publish advertisements offering a service which we believe would not benefit clients as they are led to suppose from the advertisements. Moreover, in view of the frankness of this discussion, it is unlikely that advertising in our magazine would bring returns such as the advertisers have a right to expect.

Let us make our policy clear.

We have not made a rule barring the advertising of photoplay schools.

We have a rule barring a form of advertising which creates a false idea of the opportunities in the photoplay field.

This same objection applies to overstatements of any nature in advertising—overstatement of the opportunities in the fiction field or the ease with which fiction-writing may be mastered; overstatement of the value of a book; overstatement of the value or necessity of any service.

The rule will be more rigidly enforced than ever during the coming year. It will not necessarily bar the scenario schools from announcing their service (as long as they do not present false allurements to students), for there are undoubtedly persons so situated that they can benefit from proper instruction—as in the two cases previously instanced. There are also those who would like to study photoplay writing for pleasure and for its generally broadening influence.

Therefore we desire to make it clear that if the scenario schools are willing to “come down to earth” in their advertising, they will find our pages open to them.

A statement of our reasons for applying this policy in individual cases is here appended.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation

This is the largest concern in the country professing to teach scenario-writing and to sell the work of its students. It is a heavy advertiser, not only in all writers' publications, but in general mediums. It offers a course which has been recommended by Will Hays and other high authorities, and which THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST believes to be thorough and conscientious. It employs a “Creative Test,” to determine whether applicants have sufficient natural ability to be acceptable as students.

In a voluminous correspondence received during the past month at this office, many doubts have been raised as to the sincerity with which this test is conducted. Numerous readers question whether “prospects” ever are rejected.

This suspicion is natural, but we believe it does the school an injustice. Major J. C. Carlingham, the Palmer representative in this region, recently produced for our benefit a list of those in his field who had failed to pass the creative test in the past few months. It totaled apparently more than

\$7000 in prospective enrollments. These, he assured us, the company had declined to accept as students. An official of the corporation at one time advised us that only twelve per cent of those who fill out the test questionnaire are invited to enroll. The evidence on this point seems reasonably convincing, and we understand that the company offers to open its books to responsible persons who desire to investigate further.

Within the past few months the Palmer Corporation has launched a producing studio, offering \$1000 and royalties for stories which it actually films. This one open market, however, is limited to its own students. The first Palmerplay, “Judgment of the Storm,” by Ethel Styles Middleton, will be released January 6. Members of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST staff, invited to a preview of the picture in Denver, regard it as comparing favorably in many respects with the majority of screen productions of the day. Three other plays by students, it is stated, have been accepted by the company and are being produced.

The production of its own pictures was undertaken by the Palmer Corporation avowedly to combat the “closed shop” policy of producers. The Palmer Corporation has consistently maintained that it was fighting to secure recognition for the unknown scenarist, and it has shown its sincerity by finally entering the production field.

Analyzing the situation from another standpoint, however, we cannot avoid the conclusion that, being unable to sell stories to the existing producers, and therefore running out of inducements to prospective students, the Palmer Company was compelled to manufacture inducements by producing pictures of its own. The Authors' League report, evidently referring to the Palmer advertising literature, stated: “So far as can be ascertained by this committee nearly all of the sales claimed seem to have been made a long time ago, when there was a demand for short-reel stories at low prices. Certainly no recent sales by pupils at prevailing prices are claimed.”

In justice to the Palmer Corporation, we must give it credit for the things it does and the things it has tried to do. Why, then, is its advertising barred from the current issue?

Because its announcements, including the advertisement offered for the January issue, are designed to dazzle readers by representing that there are untold openings to fame and fortune in the photoplay field and to induce them to send for literature which would further inflame them with desire to take the Palmer Course and thereby reap substantial rewards through scenario-writing.

The present series of Palmer advertisements bear upon the success of Ethel Styles Middleton, an obscure housewife, who receives \$1000 and royalties and has her name flashed on a thousand screens as a result of trying the Palmer creative test, which will be sent to anyone upon request.

No mention is made of the fact that the Palmer Corporation offers practically the sole market open to its students, and that it can produce the work of only a dozen or so a year, out of several thousand enrollments. Only the exceptional rewards are featured.

We publish here a very frank and businesslike letter from Mr. R. L. Manker, president of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation. It will be noted

that Mr. Manker admits the existence of a "closed shop" policy among the producers toward the unknown writer. Since this is the point upon which the whole controversy depends, the argument seems to end here. It may be stated that if the Palmer Corporation's display advertising stated the situation as frankly and clearly as, in our opinion, this letter does, we could find no objection to it.

Hollywood, Calif., December 5, 1923.

Mr. Willard E. Hawkins, The Author & Journalist,
Denver, Colorado.

My Dear Mr. Hawkins:

I appreciate very much your good letter of November 23, inviting me to reply to the report on scenario schools published in The Authors' League Bulletin.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation desires to avoid entering into any controversy with the Authors' League of America or with any person or group of persons whose points of view are not in accord with our own.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation invites investigation at any and all times, provided the purposes of such investigation are clearly set forth, and provided the investigators are inspired by a sincere desire to arrive at honest, unprejudiced conclusions.

This organization is fighting in the open against the "closed shop" in the motion-picture industry. It is a producer of motion pictures, utilizing the creative product of the writers whom it has trained, and it pays those writers a flat sum of \$1000 for each story accepted for production and shares for five years the net profits of its pictures with its authors. In addition, it maintains at considerable expense a department for the submission and sale of meritorious stories to other producers.

The Palmer Course and Service is offered only to men and women who pass our entrance examination creditably, and last year many thousands of applicants were frankly advised against undertaking the study of screen technique.

Our catalogue plainly and forcibly points out the aims and ideals of this institution, and clearly explains the situation exactly as it exists in the motion-picture industry. No one takes up the study of photoplay writing under our tutelage without having first been informed of the difficulties to be encountered, and everyone comes to us with his eyes open. In short, the department of education offers at a reasonable tuition fee an education in screen technique. We guarantee to graduate no student into a commercially successful writer, although a great many students have unreservedly stated that we have done all of that and more.

If you have looked over the Palmer Course and have familiarized yourself with our methods of teaching, there can be no doubt in your mind regarding its merits. Whether we teach by correspondence or in classes is entirely beside the point. Correspondence instruction plays too important a part in our educational system to be characterized as "worthless." Several of the writers who signed the League report would benefit greatly by a study of the Palmer Course.

I am enclosing a page torn from the December 1, Motion Picture News, containing a review of our first production, "Judgment of the Storm." This review constitutes the reply of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation to the Authors' League report.

We believe that the motion-picture industry is suffering severely from a lack of trained creative talent, and we, as producers, propose to keep right on fighting along precisely the same lines until there is the same kind of a democracy in motion pictures that is found in the publishing world. There is a great democracy in letters and there must and will be in pictures. A handful of studio writers and "adapters" cannot bring the screen up to its greatest heights, nor can any cabal or inner circle for long close the gates against the pressure of the new minds and the new genius that is rising like a flood to meet the need of this new art.

It seems to me that if you intend to bar questionable advertising from your publication, you cannot consistently ignore the attack made in

the same issue of the League Bulletin upon correspondence schools teaching short-story writing. On page one of the October Bulletin you will find a paragraph devoted to the suggestion that the other crafts follow the example of the Screen Writers' Guild. Inasmuch as you sponsor a course in story-writing, I presume you will be asked shortly to submit a detailed account of the achievements of your pupils.

Naturally, we should dislike to see our advertising removed from your pages, but you are the official censor and your position is an autocratic one. Therefore, we shall await your decision in the matter.

There will be no reply to the League report prepared for publication in The Author & Journalist or any other publication. I and my associates adhere to the conviction that the institution we represent is performing a useful and constructive work; that our students benefit appreciably in a cultural way from their contact with us, and that even though a screen story is never sold, the training is worth all that is charged for it. Countless expressions from pupils attest to the sincerity of this belief.

I want you to know that I am deeply appreciative of your fairness in this matter, and grateful to you for the opportunity you have given me to reply in your columns to the League's report. I believe Mr. Holway has given you figures refuting the assertions made by the investigating committee, which, by the way, declined to accept our invitation to investigate us at first hand. It would be interesting to know why this invitation was not accepted.

Permit me to compliment you on the improvements you have made in your magazine. Your new title is much more apt and exceedingly more compelling, in my opinion. You are on the right track, and I wish you a full measure of success.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain,

Sincerely yours,

ROY L. MANKER, President.

The letter from Mr. B. A. Holway, mentioned by Mr. Manker, covers somewhat similar ground. It has the ring of sincerity and conveys the impression that Mr. Holway thoroughly believes in the work and ideals of the institution. Mr. Holway submitted a list of original stories in refutation of the Authors' League report to the effect that not four original stories from unknown writers had been accepted by the studios in a year. This list was referred to Mr. Birch and it will be noted that he discusses it in his article, concluding with the statement that the list means nothing as a dependable criterion. However, in fairness to the scenario school, this portion of Mr. Holway's letter is reproduced:

In addition to the four stories purchased by us on the royalty plan whereby the author receives one thousand dollars each advance on royalties from the earnings of the picture, three of which, "Judgment of the Storm," by Ethel Styles Middleton; "Unguarded Gates," by Harold Shumate, and "Lost," by Will Lambert, have been completed and are ready for release, while the fourth, "Truste Stoops to Conquer," by Walter G. Hallstead of Penn Yan, N. Y., is in preparation; in addition to these our records show the following original stories sold by Palmer-trained writers, either through our Photoplay Sales Department, or direct to the producer:

"Bishop of Hollywood," by Bernadine King of Kansas City, to Fred Caldwell, Caldwell Productions; "Robes of Redemption," by Jane Hurrell, San Francisco, to Allen Holubar for Metro release; "The Ninth Name," by Katherine Cooke Briggs, Washington, D. C., to R. C. Pictures Corp.; "Rider of Devilshoof," by Clare Rusk, Baltimore, to Charles R. Seeling, Seeling Productions; "The Fighting Pedagogue," by H. A. Halbert, Texas, to Neal Hart; "Violets of Yesteryear," by Euphrasie Nolle, Berkeley, California, to Hobart Bosworth; Comedy (title not known), by Idyle Shepard Way, Boston, her fourth to Robertson Cole for Carter deHaven; "The Living Proof," by W. F. Hicks, New Zea-

land, to an English producer; "The Man Who Wouldn't Remove His Hat," by Phil Lenoir, to Neal Hart; "David," by Hester Martin, Indiana, to Central Film Corporation (an independent producing corporation with headquarters in St. Louis); "The Fiddler," "Cactus Flower," and eight others (titles not yet announced), by Theodore A. Harper, Portland, Oregon, to Cope Film Corporation; "High Dawn," by Carlyle Raht, Philadelphia, to Stellar Productions; "The Old Music Master," by Katherine Chesnaye, San Diego, to Warrenton-Shute Productions; "Karma," by Allena McGee Powers, Glendale, California, to R. B. Wilcox; "Service," by Anna Blake Mezquida, San Francisco, to Thomas H. Ince; "The 32nd Hour," by Leonard Bayer, Baltimore, to Loew Productions; adaptation, "Dancing Feet," by Anna Blake Mezquida, to Balasco Productions; "Ethan of the Mountains," by Sarah Waters, to Monroe Salisbury; "Duchess of Dago Dan's," by Harold Shumate, to Irving Productions; a series of comedies and comedy-dramas by Erwin Myers of Calcutta, India, to Madan Theatres, Ltd., India; "Next, Please," by Dave Bader, current Century Comedy release; "The Inner Sight," by Martha Lord, now in production at the Thomas H. Ince Studios.

The Palmer Photoplay Corporation will probably never be able to write a complete record of its achievements, for, out of deference to the wishes of so many students who have won success through the Palmer Course, all reference to their achievements is omitted. Many who win success have never informed us, still others have requested that we make no mention of their achievements. An instance of this is found in a student who has made a really notable success in Hollywood as a result of his training in the Palmer Course and Service, but who has consistently requested that he be given no publicity in that connection—all this despite the fact that he is very friendly to the institution and to its personnel.

In addition to the notable successes achieved by many students in the sale of original story material to producers, not an inconsiderable number of students have won their way to success in studio activities. In one Eastern studio alone there have been at one time eight Palmer students actively employed on the scenario staff, and in another half that many. Here in Hollywood are many Palmer students who have become staff writers, art directors, research directors, assistant production managers, and independent producers and directors. Mention of many of these will be found in our booklet, "Little Stories of Success."

To sum up: We commend the Palmer Photoplay Corporation for its efforts to create a market for the work of talented unknown scenarists, and for backing this effort by establishing its own production department. We believe also that the corporation offers a conscientious course in scenario-writing, which can be studied to advantage for its broadening effect and which will help a writer to "make good" who already has the ear of a producer. We do not, however, believe that there exists at this time a market for original stories by new writers, aside from the limited market which the Palmer Photoplay Corporation itself has devised in order to find some outlet for the work of its students. We have refused advertising copy of the institution as submitted, simply because in our judgment it creates a falsely alluring impression of the opportunities in the scenario-writing field.

The Bristol Photoplay Studios

This is a New York concern. Its plan, as we understand it, is not to teach scenario-writing, but to revise stories submitted by clients, for a stated fee, and submit them to the producers.

If there existed a market for suitably prepared photoplays, there could be no objection to an honestly conducted service of this nature.

We have declined to accept the advertising of this concern for the current issue on the following grounds: (1) Holding as we do the belief that there is no satisfactory market for original scenarios by unknown writers, we cannot conscientiously carry an advertisement which seeks to obtain money from writers for what must presumably be a futile service. (2) The company thus far has made no response to our letter inviting it to submit data showing that it has made sales for clients. (3) Its advertising claims, in the light of facts brought forth by this investigation, are calculated to mislead.

With reference to this latter objection: The company carries a standing advertisement headed, "Write for the Movies. Big money in it." It goes on to impress the reader with "the demand for fresh, interesting, true-to-life screen stories" and seeks to convey the idea that screen writing is an easy occupation that requires neither genius nor "tedious, tiresome" study to master. "Send us your bare ideas and we will do the rest" is the purport of the advertisement. This copy has been appearing in several writers' publications including our own. THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST has reached the conclusion that no honest publication can afford to sponsor misleading assertions such as these, regardless of the merit of the institution that makes them.

The Universal Scenario Corporation

We rejected the advertising of this concern for a former issue, and again for the current issue of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST; but it has appeared in some other publications for writers. To our letter stating that we could not accept the advertising unless we found good reason to change our views concerning it, Mr. C. L. Young of the Dake-Johanet Advertising Agency, which submitted the advertisement, replied:

Los Angeles, California, Nov. 28, 1923.

Mr. Willard E. Hawkins, 1835 Champa St.,
Denver, Colorado.

Dear Sir:

Your letter of November 23rd received. Herewith find an accurate statement of the Universal Scenario Corporation as operating. To our own knowledge their statement is an exact fact.

"The Universal Scenario Corporation is doing a legitimate publishing business, copyrighting original stories for authors through publication in the Scenario Bulletin Review, affording the authors a government copyright, transfer certificate of which is issued to the individual authors. This is arrived at as follows: When the original manuscript is received, a brief synopsis is carefully drawn, therefrom, which synopsis is charged for at the rate of two cents per word. It is very rarely that such a brief synopsis runs over one thousand words. The average being between five hundred and seven hundred and fifty words. This synopsis is then published in the Bulletin Review which is published once a month and distributed to all the studios in Hollywood and other various points where production is going on. Besides this distribution, a studio representative is kept constantly at the studios submitting these stories under copyright to the various producers who are in need of material."

Besides this work, the Universal Scenario Corporation also publishes the Popular Scenario Writer, a technical or trade journal, published for the interest of scenario writers, both amateur and professional, a copy of which is being mailed you under separate cover. The Universal Scenario Corporation has been in business for the past six

(Continued on Page 28)

A Defense of the American Tradition

*Sneering Comment Made by Critic in Review on the West
Portrayed by Emerson Hough Arouses Ire of
Old-Timers in the Cow Country*

By William MacLeod Raine

WHEN is a tenderfoot not a tenderfoot?

In *The Literary Digest International Book Review* this question is raised by Stuart Henry when he attacks the authenticity of the late Emerson Hough's "North of 36." He says that Hough did not come west until the frontier epoch had ended and that as a tenderfoot he was "filled with amazing tales designed to flabbergast green Easterners."

This is amusing. The guns of the Lincoln County cattle war were still echoing in New Mexico when Emerson Hough located in the little town of White Oaks. Billy the Kid, most notorious outlaw ever known in the West, was still dodging in the chaparral close to the village where Hough was a reporter on the White Oaks *Golden Era*. I have before me a letter written Edwin H. Hoover by Charles A. Siringo, author of "A Lone Star Cowboy" and other true tales of the early days. Siringo went to work for wages as a cowboy in '67. He ought to know as much about the West as Stuart Henry, named in "Who's Who" as the author of various books having to do with French salons and Paris evenings. Referring to Emerson Hough, he writes: "Seems to me that forty years in the West ought to make a 'feller's' feet tough."

It was in 1881 that Hough located in White Oaks, New Mexico. The frontier epoch had ended then, Mr. Henry says. Interesting, if true. Particularly interesting to me, because it was in 1881 that my father brought his family into the Southwest from England and went into the cattle business (with side lines of tie-making and lumbering). Through my father's efforts the first public school was established in the district where we lived. The nearest village was thirty miles away. I and my small brothers

used to ride twenty miles to get the mail once a week. That outpost of civilization my memory can make the setting of a score of dramatic incidents. The frontier was not a hard and fast condition which can be defined as having vanished on a specific date. Civilization followed the line of least resistance. It lapped forward here and there, leaving pockets which did not yield to its influence for many years.

Mr. Henry says: "Almost no one now lives who saw the Chisholm Trail or that early village of Abilene, Kansas, once the famous cattle emporium." This is a strange statement. Surely Mr. Henry knows that the drives lasted more than twenty years, that even as late as 1884 more than 300,000 cattle were driven up the trail. Has Mr. Henry never heard of Andy Adams, whose "Log of a Cowboy" and other books are authentic and invaluable tales of the trail, deserving a place in the library of all Westerners? Has he never heard of Charles A. Siringo, of Colonel Goodnight, of W. D. Reynolds? All of these men drove cattle from Texas northward and are still in the land of the living. There are many others scattered throughout the West who can say the same thing.

No cattle trails extended north as far as within six hundred miles of the Canadian line, Mr. Henry writes. This also is a puzzling statement. Surely he cannot be ignorant of the fact that cattle were pushed on the hoof into Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Oregon, and even into Canada.

THERE is no need to write a defense of Emerson Hough. He was in and of the West. He told in fiction the epic story of its making. What he had written speaks for itself. I have heard old-timers say that "North of 36" made the old days relive for

them, that while reading it they smelt again the dust of the herd and tasted the smoke of vanished camp fires.

Back of Mr. Henry's criticism is a point of view suggested rather than expressed. He refers to the Chisholm Trail as "notorious," to the frontier folk as "weazened, weary, forlorn," gaunt homely men and women who led sordid lives.

This is quite in line with the feeling of the new school of writers that has sprung up among us. They do not care for the American tradition. The thing we have done is of no value, the empire we have built is wholly Philistine. The vanished men and women who contributed to it had only a Main Street outlook. We must look to Europe for any valid impulse. A literature that reflects the heroic spirit of the great adventure of winning the West is "romance," to be treated as childish and unimportant. After all, the world was made since 1918. Anything that happened before that does not matter. Let us have realism, stories of the neurotic emotions of youths who have no standards except self-made ones!

I BELIEVE in the new world in which we live. But the best of that new world is being fashioned out of the old. We shall move on to a larger freedom of expression, but we cannot do this adequately by discarding all the old that is worth while. I believe with all my heart in the American tradition. We cannot fling it aside except with loss too heavy for us and the world to pay.

Emerson Hough cherished in his work that tradition. He tried to portray its epic quality, to show the color and aspect of a young world in the making. He felt and pictured the value of the simple and elemental people who lived in the sun- and wind-swept spaces of which he writes.

These people were not weazened or forlorn or sordid, no matter how weary at times they may have been. The poet has a truer vision of the pioneer and of his mission than has Mr. Henry, I must continue to believe.

"His neighbors' smoke shall vex his eyes,
their voices break his rest;

He shall go forth till South is North, sullen
and dispossess;

And he shall desire loneliness, and his desire
shall bring

Hard on his heels a thousand wheels, a
people and a king;

And he shall come back on his own track and
by his scarce cool camp;

There he shall meet the roaring street, the
derrick and the stamp;

For he must blaze a nation's ways with
hatchet and with brand

Till on his last-won wilderness an Empire's
bulwark stand."

It would be good to know that we shall play our part in the drama of life as well as these pioneers of whom Emerson Hough has written so faithfully and so well.

Why Worry Over the Plot?

LET the story tell itself. Start it with almost any character, incident and situation; provided that the character, incident and situation have dramatic possibilities. Then have the character react as such a character naturally would under the given circumstances in real life. The action thus started will at once suggest the action that should follow in logical sequence. The action that follows will in turn indicate the action that should come. Thus on with the story to the climax and the end.

Let the story tell itself naturally, just as if it were really happening, and you, as well as your readers, will often be agreeably surprised by some happy turn in events, some delightful twist in the circumstances, some unexpected dramatic situation, that even you, the author, did not suspect, but

which happened quite naturally, as unexpected things frequently do in real life.

Characters, plots, and the accompanying actions thus pleasantly brought into being are quite sure to have a freshness and originality that the cut-and-dried plot formulas and plot developers never seem able to achieve.

But here, as in gastronomy, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. In my own work, I have found this the most successful method of writing a story; and some of the great authors say that this is the only way they can write a tale and do justice to themselves and their readers.

Of course, this requires that the author should be what might be called a natural story-teller; but then, no one who is not a natural story-teller should even attempt to write fiction.

Everett McNeil.

As the Editor Views Your Story

*A Story Without Characterization Is Like an Egg Without Salt;
Some Reflections Based Upon the Editor's Daily
Grist of Manuscript Hopefuls*

Anonymous

(The article that follows was written for *THE AUTHOR AND JOURNALIST* by an editor who passes regularly upon a vast assortment of submitted magazine material. His name would carry authority, for it is one with which practically all our readers are familiar, but we have been unable to induce him to let us divulge it. Hence this anonymous presentation of his observations.—THE EDITOR.)

"CHARACTERIZATION" has been handled so often and so ably that more on the subject would seem to be superfluous. Yet, as an editor, I am constrained to the belief that advice, articles and adjuration in this most important phase of short-story writing have either gone over the heads or under the feet of an alarming percentage of writers. Evidence, in the form of impossible manuscripts ("impossible" because, in most cases, the characters are so poorly identified as to make the entire story confusing and unreal), piles up on my desk daily.

Before me is a 'script. On the first page, the author introduces five characters—by name only. None of these people aroused the slightest interest in me. I can't see this group; there is no physical description; no indication of age (except that the reader is permitted to guess that one male individual is middle-aged because he is indicated as the father of the girl who is presumably the heroine); no faintest effort is made to visualize the actors in the forecasted drama. The editor is left to presume that drama will ensue because the introduction is so heavy and mysterious.

Now, why couldn't this writer have offered a "sympathetic character" to intrigue interest? Or why couldn't he have presented a villain—anyone to grip the reader's attention? I will read to the end of the page, chapter, story or book if some individual in it holds my attention; but if no such person appears, my interest, like that of anyone else, wanes. The story becomes confusing; the plot becomes involved simply because I have

to refresh my memory as to the identity of Hamilton Hash or Dotty Dozen each time a new situation develops or action takes place. I glance back over the first few pages of manuscript and exclaim, to myself: "Oh yes. He's the man who went down cellar after some potatoes on page one"; or, "This Dozen woman is the one who was setting the supper-table on page two. I got her balled up with her maiden aunt who dropped a saltcellar on page three."

This effort at identification takes my mind from the story. It irritates me—just as it would irritate anybody. A fiction tale should read easily. It should command, challenge, enforce interest.

A tense situation creeps into the foreground of the plot. Someone is about to be killed, abducted or assaulted—yet I don't know the actors, despite the fact that I've been faithfully keeping abreast of the story (or trying to do so) and am supposed to be intimately acquainted with them. A female is imperiled, but she is only a name to me. I finally "place" her as Dotty Dozen. She has no features; no figure; no mind; no mental reactions. The author gives me the privilege of endowing her with these qualities if I think she needs them.

ANOTHER actor, a male person, is projected onto the scene. He is labeled "Hamilton Hash." Otherwise I wouldn't know him from Adam's off ox if I should meet him on the broad highway, except that he is on two legs while the other animal would be walking on four legs.

As the action proceeds, Bill Buzzard undertakes to kidnap Miss Dozen. He snarls and sneers. He is a villain—but he has some personality and I find myself rooting for him because he is the only individual who stands out as a distinct entity. This is all wrong. I should be cheering for the hero. But how can I feel much sympathy for a man—Hamilton Hash—who is a col-

orless, formless, entirely neutral specimen of the genus homo? I can't convince myself that he is much of a man, else he would arouse some sentiment, interest or admiration in me. He doesn't inspire me with any emotion whatsoever.

I've said that I found myself rooting for Bill Buzzard. I'll take it back. I simply don't give a darn which way the complication ends. I'm a disinterested spectator at what is presumed to be a hectic melodrama, a thriller. I get no thrills. The story will go back to the writer with a rejection slip; and I will turn to the next manuscript in the hope that a real man or woman will step out on the first page and begin to do something interesting and convincing. Or even if such person does not immediately start something, I'll be glad to come in contact with a fascinating personality.

On the other hand—as the girl remarked, displaying a ring on her engagement finger to the ardent, though unwelcome, suitor who clasped her right hand—there is the manuscript with a character convincingly portrayed but with no plot on which to predicate his action. Such a manuscript is tantalizing. It contains possibilities.

The hero is one Horace Horsecar. He is virile. One *feels* his mental reactions. One *sees* him on a vivid background of mountains, plains or city. Yet the author fails to utilize his possibilities. Horace is all ready for action, but his creator, for some reason, does not develop a crisis in his life. He meets Caroline Chestnut who adores strong, masterful men and the twain are married after a rather prosaic courtship and Horace sinks into more or less graceful oblivion as the husband of a beautiful woman. Too bad! Still, I make it a point to encourage the writer who introduced me to Horace. I invite him to send something else. He knows people. And if that writer—who is a tyro in his profession—sends Horace back to me in another vehicle, I'll greet Mr. Horsecar like an old friend. He's real folks!

It is, of course, the combination of interesting characters and fascinating plot that makes for a readable story. There are a few—a very few—successful writers who market their wares on plot alone. They have a genius for developing situations that hold the reader spellbound while their puppets fly back and forth, operating the plot machinery so cleverly that nothing seems

amiss. Yet these are not the stories that live. Neither are they the stories that “crash the gates” for the big money in fiction. The writer of such a tale will have to turn out three or four manuscripts to realize the price of one yarn such as is created by the author who puts living, palpitating characters into his work, even though he may be at fault on plot.

There is nothing so disappointing to an editor as the story that works up a breathless suspense and then slides into a tame or unconvincing denouement. “Dream” stories are of this type. The author involves his characters in a situation from which he has not the ingenuity to extricate them, so he informs the reader that it didn't really happen. It simply occurred in the subconscious mind of his hero, villain or heroine. The reader is fooled, that is true, but there is no glory in mystifying an audience over something that never happened—unless it is accomplished in some totally unprecedented manner, as in Mark Twain's story where he blandly informs the reader that he has plunged his character into such a desperate plight that there is no way out. So he will leave the poor man to worry it out in any way he sees fit!

The story that concludes with long-winded explanations—which are usually uninteresting—is, as a rule, self-damnatory. When such a manuscript comes to me I always think of a man trying to stop leaks in a sinking boat. If the craft—the story—is seaworthy, it will come to the end of its journey fit, trim and in no need of repair. It should require no calking of seams or plugging of holes. The well-constructed short-story ends logically when the action concludes. A few paragraphs, preferably only a sentence or two, should suffice to “tie up the loose ends” of plot.

Reference has been made to “fooling the reader.” Some days ago, a mystery story was under consideration. Characters darted hither and thither incognito, darkly and apparently without reason. Their only excuse for conducting themselves in this manner, it developed, was to “fool the reader.” When the author finally whipped the story into some semblance of form, it was apparent that he himself had fallen into the very trap that he had set for his reader! With the suspense ended, there were so many uninterpreted circumstances, cryptic

utterances and clandestine episodes that, after a couple of pages devoted to patchwork explanation, he gave it up in despair—but, unlike Mark Twain, he tried to keep up the semblance of realism by putting some such words as these into the mouth of a minor character:

"You'll see how it all happened when you think it over!"

This story had all the elements of success and the author failed in it because he wrote from too detached a viewpoint. If he had stayed with the logical viewpoints of his characters, he could have accomplished a very creditable surprise ending. Yet the information that might reasonably have come within their ken was not sufficient for him. He attempted omniscience—even going to the extent of ferreting the mind of a dead man to patch up a leak in his denouement! The deceased's secret might plausibly have come into the possession of a living person, but the writer was so intent on "fooling the reader" that he trapped himself into letting the essential knowledge die; seeing his error, he attempted to rectify it by resurrecting the secret in a wholly implausible, incredible and unconvincing way.

The master craftsman depicts his story in a series of word pictures. He portrays his characters in such a manner that the reader knows them intimately by sight and almost by instinct; and he holds this mental image before the spectator at all times. He works his actors into the crisis, intelligently, inexorably. He even goes to the pains of indicating a way out of the situation—and then promptly evolves a reason why this cannot be done. He gives all information in possession of all the characters and submits it to the reader's scrutiny. Nothing is held back. Actors, stage setting, mental reactions—all is presented. Then, when the crisis is so tense that something or somebody *must* break, the solution is there—so apparent, so obvious that it is incredible that the reader did not see it. And it is so dramatic that one wonders why he did not feel the thrill of its approach!

This sort of "fooling the reader" is perfectly legitimate. The public, the editor—anyone—will pay grateful homage to a mentality greater than his own. But it makes 'em mad when someone leads them on a wild-goose chase that bags no game after a laborious pursuit.

The Dilemma Contest

Wit-Sharpener Report

THE Contest Editor and judges in the Wit-Sharpener contest were obliged to disqualify a large number of Mss. that had unusual qualities for plot development because they did not come within the scope of the present contest, which was to present a *dilemma*. Many contestants offered material that would work nicely into short stories and presented unusual opportunities for dramatic climaxes; but, since the contest was limited to dilemmas, enthusiasm was restrained and the AUTHOR & JOURNALIST staff "hewed to the line" in restricting problems to the indicated field.

The dilemma situation submitted by Walter J. Krieg, 1555 Edmund Street, St. Paul, Minn., who wins first prize, leaves little to be desired by way of drama, logical premise, or possibilities for development. It is difficult to imagine a man who is a father, a crusader against wrong, and a dyed-in-the-wool newspaper man being called upon to make a more momentous and immediate decision. Tom Blake is indeed "on the horns of a dilemma."

First Prize Winner:

Tom Blake, night editor of the influential *Morning Times*, incurs the enmity of Jerry Daly,

powerful, unscrupulous political boss of the city, by printing exposures of his election frauds. Jerry swears revenge, and with his men watches every move of Blake and his daughter.

The night before general election, Daly hears that Blake is to print, election morning, a thorough expose of Daly's doings, thereby causing the defeat of the Daly crowd.

Ten minutes before press time, with the story ready for the front page, Blake receives a phone call from a reporter on the News, Daly's paper, telling that Blake's daughter, 20, is carousing at a roadhouse, intoxicated, and that if he runs the Daly story the News will front-page the story of Blake's daughter.

Blake, nonplused, remembers her saying something about a party, but not where. Again the phone rings, and a woman tells him his daughter is at this wild, unknown roadhouse.

After unsuccessful frantic phoning, he drops into a chair. He can't delay the paper. If the story is omitted, Daly will win, but Blake will save his daughter; or is it a frame-up? What does he do?

The judges awarded second prize to Mrs. Thomas J. Wesley, 462 Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Ga. The element of human drama is almost as well depicted in this problem as in Mr. Krieg's dilemma. It appears to be quite feasible, and we have an idea that later, when contestants are turned loose to solve Hugh Straghan's predicament, there will be some mighty interesting solutions.

Second Prize Winner:

Hugh Straghan, in young manhood, kills a friend, Jim Pirkle. As he turns to flee, Jim's brother, Joe, grapples with him. Straghan escapes.

He wanders to a distant city, goes straight, marries, rears a family. At length he is elected chief of police.

A certain gang is giving lots of trouble. Different members are arrested, but each in turn refuses to squeal on "the man higher up." But at last one is apprehended who consents to turn state's evidence. Straghan and his lieutenants unconsciously lean forward to catch the name that will fall from the traitor's lips. It is—Joe Pirkle!

Willis K. Jones, Spinning Wheel Inn, Oxford, Ohio, who wins third prize, has evolved an extremely interesting dilemma—one that would be entitled to higher rating if it were not for what the judges consider a decided flaw, in that there seems hardly sufficient motive for the woman's suicide. In a more detailed version, this might be adequately accounted for, however, and when the situation is employed as a basis for a later wit-sharpener, contestants will be required to supply a motive.

Third Prize Winner:

Judge Turner, avowed enemy of divorce, is running for senator, aided by his second wife, president of Federated Women Voters, and by his first father-in-law, a prominent politician. He expects to win.

His first wife, an invalid, was lost with most of the other passengers when her ship struck an iceberg. Two years later Turner married again.

He has refused to grant a divorce to Mrs. Bigelow, although she swore she'd rather die than return to her husband. By messenger Turner receives information of her discovery that Judge Turner's first wife was saved, but crazed by shipwreck and exposure is confined in a sanatorium. Mrs. Bigelow threatens revenge by disclosing his consequently illegal second marriage. Summoned

to her house, he goes immediately, anxious to discover the truth, but finds that she has committed suicide, naming the Judge as her secret lover. He fears she has also revealed the wreck story. He cannot explain to the police his presence at Mrs. Bigelow's home without confessing the details, thereby losing his wife and the sympathy of his women voters. Without explanation, he alienates his wife's affection and gets undeserved notoriety. He loves both women he married. What shall he do?

Wit-Sharpener for January

The first prize winner above—the dilemma developed by Mr. Krieg—will serve as the basis for the January wit-sharpener.

PROBLEM: Develop this situation to an effective conclusion. For the best development a prize of \$5 will be given; for the second best, a prize of \$3, and for the third best, a prize of \$2.

CONDITIONS: The plot outline as completed must contain not more than 300 words, exclusive of the original problem. It must be typed or legibly written. If stamped envelope (not loose stamps) is enclosed, unsuccessful entries will be returned with brief statement of considerations which barred them from winning a prize. Only one solution may be submitted by the same person.

Manuscripts must be received by February 1. Winning outlines will be published in April issue. Address the Contest Editor.

An Opportunity for Comparison

As announced last month, the solutions of the problem presented in the December issue, in order to be considered for the prizes, must be in our hands by January 1. In presenting this problem we made an interesting experiment. The problem was a simplified version of one that had been employed by Edwin Hunt Hoover, associate editor of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, as the basis of a short-story written for Editor A. L. Sessions of the Street & Smith magazines. This story, under the title of "Everything But the Truth," has been published in the December 15th issue of People's Magazine. It will be interesting not only for the Contest Editor, but for contestants who desire to do so to compare their developments of the situation with the published version.

Good News for Readers

We have other articles in stock by those unqualified favorites with our readers, A. H. Bittner, Warren H. Miller, and H. Bedford-Jones. Mr. Bedford-Jones will appear on the contents page of the February issue, with an article giving important hints on selling to the English markets. Bittner and Miller will follow in subsequent numbers. Another interesting article scheduled for early publication is by Howard Philip Rhoades, well-known short-story writer, who gives his reflections on selling "The First Hundred Stories."

Get Your Last Line First

How an Author Worked in Writing a Story a Week; Story Must Grow Like a Tree From a Seed, Cannot be Put Together Like Machinery

By Hewes Lancaster

MANY years ago, when I was writing under my initials F. H. instead of Hewes, I worked for the Daily Story Publishing Co., Chicago, now defunct. They allowed me fifteen hundred words in which to tell a well-rounded story with a snappy ending. I wrote a story every week and sold nearly all that I wrote. Here's how I managed to do it:

I got my last line, a little bunch of short words that would close the story with a snap, then I got my title, established my locale, and jumped my plot through from title to last line without any sidestepping. Locale must be read into the mind till enough has been absorbed to color the story as it passes through. If your mind is colored with the Bermudas, your heroine will naturally drive her donkey-cart between fields of lilies and there encounter a man from New York who is out buying flowers for Easter shipment. This will make the story differ from the last one, which was laid in Mexico or Peru, and yet not one of your precious fifteen hundred words will have been squandered on local color. She has to be somewhere, and so does he.

We write more keenly of what we desire than of what we possess, so I had luck with love stories. A writer with a hankering for adventure should be as successful with adventure stories. You may write of adventure, or you may write of love, but your yarn must be clean and human. Your adventures may be lit by laughter or misted by tears, but they must not be soaked with blood. Your love may be frivolous or faithful but it must not be illicit. Take a light-hearted tone, a cheerful view of life, and go to it.

But remember always that your story must spring like a tree from a seed. You cannot put it together like a piece of machinery. And the seed you plant is that telling last line. Get your last line. It will suggest a title and your title will flush a plot.

In those eager days I lived always on the

alert for last lines. I got them out of sermons and Bible lessons; out of advertisements and chance remarks; and my reading was a constant quest for something short and strong. I got one story out of Shakespeare's "We have scotch'd the snake, not kill'd it."

The title was "A Scotch'd Snake." The story was of a young literary woman who was given to quoting Shakespeare. She spent her evenings writing while her husband peacefully read his paper, and all went well till a meddler pointed out that she was selfishly sacrificing her husband to her art. She resolved to kill the snake that was entering her Eden; gave up writing and made herself and her husband miserable until the poor devil suggested that she resume writing. She eagerly sought the serpent to see if it was dead, and was delighted to find that she had scotched the snake, though she had not killed it.

OUT of the translation of "Janizary, a Pillar of Glass," I got another story. True, I had to reread the fall of Constantinople several times to secure the locale, but time spent in alert reading is never wasted. When you are making a living with your mind you've got to feed it, and a mind can be fed only by wide reading. *Going fishing won't do it.* Neither will the reading of light literature, if you are using your mind to write light literature. When a man wants to sharpen an ax he doesn't whet it upon another ax, he puts it on a grindstone. A man who wants to keep his mind keen for writing love stories whets it upon history, poetry, philosophy and science. Those big quiet fellows, Emerson, Spencer, Mill and others, were all good to me, gave me last lines and fed my mind. They will do as much for you. We may not understand all we read but what we do understand will be bread and meat to the brain.

It is true of story-writing as of all trades: if you want to make a success of your job you've got to live for it and love it.

But before you begin, get your last line.

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Selling English Rights

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

I note in a recent number of the magazine that some English agent reports that it is useless to send stories to England that have appeared here. Perhaps for the benefit of some writers whom this might discourage from sending stories abroad, you will print this quotation from a letter written me by an English agent who has, in less than two years, sold more than seventy stories for me.

"It is curious that the editors here seem to prefer stories which we submit cut from the American magazines rather than those in typescript. I take it that the reason is that they rely with confidence on the fact that the manuscript has found favor in other editors' eyes."

At any rate, last month I received a good check for a story published here in 1916. I think if writers find the right agent they need not hesitate to send over their old stuff.

May I say here that I heartily approve of your new name and that I think the magazine gets better with every issue?

Sincerely yours,

CHRISTINE WHITING PARMENTER.

Colorado Springs, Colo.

★ ★ ★

The Plain Truth

A DISCUSSION of the photoplay situation and of our reasons for declining scenario-school advertising of the type presented for this issue, has usurped a large share of our space this month. While we regret this in view of the many interesting articles crowding for publication, still we have no apologies to make.

The subject is a live one—it interests nine out of every ten authors—and it must be threshed out fully if touched upon at all.

We asked last month for letters from readers bearing on the situation, and the number of replies amounted to a deluge. It was our intention to make something of a symposium of these replies, but after covering the situation fully in general discussion, it was found that space would not permit. The correspondence contained letters ranging all the way from the bitterest attacks upon individual photoplay schools to the warmest defense and endorsement. Particularly was the Palmer Photoplay Corporation the storm center of discussion. Many made personal calls upon us to praise the school and express their confidence in it. Others wrote expressing gratitude for the assistance it had rendered them, not in selling scenarios, but in fiction and other fields. Still others denounced it soundly for arousing in them false hopes and for failing to sell, or to enable them to sell, their scenarios.

Several correspondents gave instances within their knowledge of the acceptance of originals.

All of these seem to be included in the list submitted by Mr. Holway of the Palmer Corporation and elsewhere published. This list has been subjected to attack; but even accepting it without question, it is anything but imposing.

The plain truth is that there are not enough opportunities to go around in the scenario field. Mr. Birch in beginning his article uses a very apt simile. We might use another: If you were desirous of studying law, and should learn that with thousands of lawyers already practicing, only a dozen or so had been able to find clients, would you consider that a promising outlook? We believe not.

Yet the scenario schools urge all who have a modicum of ability to study screen writing, despite the fact that a committee of the Authors' League could find evidence of only four original stories by unknown writers being accepted by the producers in a year. Grant even the ten or twenty contended for by the photoplay forces—where does that leave the remaining umpty-thousand aspirants?

There are thousands of lawyers because there are tens of thousands of clients seeking their services. There are hundreds of fiction-writers, each selling at least a few manuscripts a year, because thousands of stories are needed to fill the magazines. And even under such circumstances, the grade is hard enough to make.

★ ★ ★

Top-Notch Has New Editor

After more than thirteen years' service as editor of *Top-Notch*, one of the Street & Smith group, Mr. Henry W. Thomas has severed his connection with the magazine and gone abroad to live. Mr. Arthur E. Scott, for nearly ten years associate editor, now succeeds Mr. Thomas as editor.

★ ★ ★

Should Authors Resent This Editorial Practice?

November 14, 1923.

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

I have just had another disagreeable experience with an editor who, without consulting me, turned my manuscript over to another market; and I have decided to ask you to discuss this matter in your pages. I know that many writers object to this editorial practice and I am sure that a frank discussion of it will be helpful to the profession and may bring suggestions for a remedy.

My first experience with this practice was with a concern that publishes a number of newsstand magazines. I was selling to one of these at from two to two and a half cents a word and I had a good market at the same or a better rate for anything that missed fire with it. However, the editor invariably turned such stories over to other maga-

zines published by the house. I like to be accommodating, and did not object. But eventually I saw that this practice was in no way benefiting me, was in fact costing me time and money. If the story sold, I received less than I would have received from my other markets; often, if it didn't sell, I received a sharp letter informing me that the story was entirely out of their field. For example, the editor turned Chinese stories over to one of the firm's other magazines, notwithstanding that the editor of the latter had told me emphatically that he wouldn't even consider stories with "that sordid atmosphere." When, finally, a sexy Western was referred to still another editor of the company, and I drew a stinging rebuke from the genial editor of "big, clean stories of outdoor life," I decided that, much as I regretted parting with editor No. 1, it was best that I be permitted to choose my markets.

It is only fair to set down here that this practice occasionally works to the advantage of the writer. Editor No. 2 above mentioned saved me time, trouble, and postage on several occasions by peddling stories that missed fire with him. But, as a rule, I believe that most writers will agree with me that this practice is more to the profit of the firm than to the writer. I think we would gain if it were stopped, except in cases where the writer specifically requests it.

My last experience, and the one that has moved me to write this letter, was with an editor who turned a manuscript over to a newspaper. He had previously paid me my usual rate of two and a half cents a word and had been very prompt in reporting. When the story in question had been held five weeks I sent him a courteous letter asking when I could look for a decision, and reminding him that my article was "timely." Back came a curt note that he had sent the story to a newspaper.

Now, in the past I have done a great deal of newspaper work at rates ranging from theater tickets to ten dollars a column; but since I broke into the magazines it's been years since I've had to accept less than two cents a word; while my American, British, and second-serial rights combined often bring the total over five cents a word. This story, therefore, had a potential value of about \$400; and the editor, without consulting me, had turned it over to a newspaper where its value would be not more than \$40.

I immediately wired the newspaper and was informed that the story had been accepted and was about to be published. After considering the matter carefully, I decided that I couldn't afford this loss, so managed to have the deal called off. The experience cost me five dollars for telegrams, a delay of six weeks in marketing a timely story, and, what is most important, cost me the friendship of two editors. Unable to see my viewpoint, they are indignant at me for causing them so much trouble.

Therefore, I'm feeling somewhat indignant myself today; and I'd like to know how other writers feel about this editorial practice. For my part, I wish that all editors would *return promptly* anything they can't use in their own publications. If they have any suggestions as to a market, I shall

be glad to receive them; but I object to an editor's selling my stuff without my knowledge or consent. Am I right, or wrong?

Fraternally yours,

LEMUEL L. DE BRA.

Lynn Haven, Fla.

Regarding the Black Cat Contest.

THE WRITERS—an organization of New York authors and editors—brings to our attention certain data concerning the short-story contest conducted by the *Black Cat*, requesting us to publish a statement by one of its victims.

The Writers is unquestionably one of the most substantial clubs of its kind in America. Its officers include Dr. George Jay Smith, president; Ethel Watts Mumford, vice-president; Herman Landon, second vice-president; Arthur E. Scott (editor of *Top-Notch*), treasurer, and Hyacinth Stoddard Smith, secretary. Past presidents are Ellis Parker Butler, George Allan England, Cleveland Moffet, Edward J. O'Brien and W. Adolphe Roberts.

That the officers of an organization composed of such leading figures as these in the world of letters should have undertaken an investigation of the *Black Cat* methods, and should have written indignantly to THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST requesting that the failure of the *Black Cat* publisher to make good his promises be exposed, places an obligation upon us which we cannot ignore. Following is the letter which we have been requested by The Writers to publish:

December 9, 1923.

The Author & Journalist, Denver, Colo.

Gentlemen:

I have recently been in correspondence with The Writers in regard to a short story contest conducted by William R. Kane of The Editor, the Editor Council and the *Black Cat*, published at Highland Falls, N. Y.

The president of The Writers reports that my letter, giving the facts in regard to Mr. Kane and his contest, was read aloud at a meeting held on November 27, and he goes on to say: "Much of what you have to say . . . was confirmed by remarks of members of The Writers." He advises me to take up the matter with the legal department of the Authors' League, and also advises me to write letters to the various publications for writers, setting forth the facts.

The contest was started in April, 1922, and was widely advertised, and was to be settled and the prizes paid on the last of August. My stories came into this Mr. Kane's hands through the Editor Council, and he wrote me personal letters urging me to enter first one and then another in the contest, saying that they were sure to win a prize and that I would do well to "back them to the limit," which meant send in money for one or more years to the *Black Cat*. The prizes were on a sliding scale (see leaflet enclosed); that is, the more money you sent in the more he would pay you, in case your story won a prize.

I am sorry to say that I fell for it and sent him \$25 to pay for two five-year subscriptions to his *Black Cat*.

The date of closing came. And passed. Weeks passed. Months. One whole year.

A threat to report to the post-office department brought me a hurriedly scratched note from Mr. Kane, saying that I had been awarded second prize, which meant \$400 for me. This was in September, 1923, one whole year after the prizes should have been announced.

I asked when, if ever, he meant to PAY the prizes. No reply came. None has ever come to date, though I have written again and again and registered.

This Mr. Kane is not dead, for he continues,

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Buy your lots *now* and join our Community Club which is being organized.

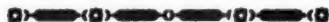
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PRIZE CONTEST ANNOUNCEMENT

Our first prize in the cabin plan contest of a \$350 building site in Moss Rock to be selected by June 1, 1924, was won by Miss Florence Lee Kraus, 350 Georgia Avenue, Mobile, Alabama; second prize of a \$100.00 credit on any building site purchased in Moss Rock before June 1, 1924, won by Miss Ethelwyn Culver, 914 Riverfront Street, Monroe, La.; third prize of a credit of \$75.00 on any building site purchased in Moss Rock before June 1, 1924, won by Miss Marchen Dinkelmar, R. F. D. No. 3, York, Nebraska. These prizes may be obtained by the winners by furnishing proof that they are Americans by birth and belong to the white race. Should any one of the contestants be unable to furnish proof they may assign their rights to some one who can make such proof, in order to conform to certain reservations. All plans have been returned to the senders except the winners.

through *The Editor* magazine to act as a light-house for young authors, and warns them away from others who are putting out schemes that are no worse than his. His magazine has never printed ONE WORD in regard to his own contest.

The matter has been reported to the post-office department by me and by others who were victims of this Mr. Kane.

It is by the advice of the president of *The Writers* that I am writing this letter to you.

Yours Truly,

BELLE M. BEATTY.

184 Seymour Street, Hartford, Conn.

★ ★ ★

The Old Timer Speaks Up in Meetin'

LITTLE can be added to the able contribution by William Macleod Raine which appears elsewhere in this issue of *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*. Yet it may be interesting to read excerpts from letters written by such authorities on the Old West as Andy Adams and Charles A. Siringo, who have written their protests to Stuart Henry's amazing attack in *The Literary Review* on "North of 36"—Emerson Hough's last and, considered by many critics, his best work.

Andy Adams, known to everyone conversant with the pioneer phases of Western and South-western history during the past half century (and even farther back than that), who is noted also as a writer of authentic books dealing with the ancient cattle trails—notably "A Log of a Cowboy"—over which he has travelled and worked, writes to *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST*:

"There must be a motive behind Mr. Henry's attack. Let me say that every tie of friendship urges me to come to the defense of Emerson Hough. I was with him in St. Luke's hospital in your city when there was a question if the operation, which finally claimed his life, could be stayed. He advised me that he had made arrangements with his publishers, in the event he did not survive, that I was to finish 'North of 36,' then well under way."

This is an interesting sidelight on Emerson Hough's own comments anent the situation while giving an interview to *THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST* more than a year ago—the last, so far as we know, that he ever gave: "I chose Andy Adams to complete my work when it appeared that I would not be able to do so, because I know of no one else so well qualified for the task by reason of personal contact with the period and people involved in 'North of 36.'"

Apropos to Mr. Stuart Henry's first flat-footed statement that no historical characters except Wild Bill Hickok appear in "North of 36," Mr. Adams opines that Chisholm, blazer of the famous "Chisholm Trail," was probably overlooked by the critic. He goes on to tell of still another:

"A third real character in 'North of 36' is Jos. G. McCoy (McCoyne in the story). It was McCoy's foresight that founded the Abilene market and induced the Texas herds to drive to that point. He was the Moses that led the cattle of Texas out of the wilderness. The Lone Star state should erect a monument to his memory."

Regarding Charles A. Siringo, parts of whose letter will be quoted and whose book "A Lone Star Cowboy" is given credit as reference by Emerson Hough in his epochal masterpiece, Mr. Adams says:

"I have known Charlie Siringo for nearly forty years. He is the real goods; is eligible in a rop-

ing contest; a native Texan, and carries the earmark and brand of an Old Timer. On the other hand, this Henry person, whoever he may be, carried no credentials to 'speak out in meetin'.' So ignorant a man as he is should never commit himself on paper."

MR. Siringo takes violent issue with Mr. Henry's assertion that Emerson Hough was a "tenderfoot"; and the statement of a man who knew "Billy The Kid" well enough to drink with him in the "olden golden days," afterward writing a history of that notorious outlaw; who knew the Texas cattle trails as few living men know them, is not one to be trifled with. Mr. Siringo declares:

"Emerson Hough was far from being a 'tenderfoot.' He had seen the West in all its phases from the early winter of 1881 when I first met him in the hurrah gold mining camp of White Oaks, Lincoln County, New Mexico. He was then a reporter on the *White Oaks Golden Era* newspaper.

"Seems to me that forty years in the West ought to make a feller's feet tough.

"It was in 1867 that I began to work for wages as a cowboy. Therefore I ought to be able to judge the story, 'North of 36.' It is as near to real life as it is possible to write fiction."

Space does not permit a more extensive survey of the correspondence that has sprung up as a result of Mr. Henry's diatribe. But these are selected because the trails of those three Old Timers, Adams, Siringo and Hough, have crossed and recrossed so frequently in the early days that the testimony of the former pair is especially valuable to the latter at this time when an attempt is being made to disperse an American tradition established by the colorful, authentic literature of Emerson Hough.

Edwin H. Hoover.

★ ★ ★

Claims Pioneer Investigation

Dear Mr. Hawkins:

Relative to the report of the Authors' League committee on the photoplay schools, let me call your attention to honest handling of the schools which appeared more than a year ago, before the McCardell publication or the subsequent matters.

I refer to my book, "*Modern Photoplay Writing—Its Craftmanship*," published last year, and which your book department handles.

On page 330 the schools in general are mentioned; on page 383 a certain school and its methods are specified; on page 390 the schools and their tests are mentioned again. In fact, this book has been highly commended by the editor of a certain large fan magazine for the manner in which it has handled the schools. All this, mind you, was a year ago.

There is a certain school which has sold a number of the originals written by its students during a period of years. For that it deserves all credit; but, if investigation were made into the matter, it would be found that most of the stories of its students so disposed of were sold to the smaller and less widely known producers (including itself)—a fact which is mentioned in my book indirectly.

Credit belongs where credit is due; in this matter of the schools I have been one of the pioneer investigators and writers.

Shreveport, La.

HOWARD T. DIMICK.

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lock the editorial doors, and whose viewpoint, at the same time, is inspiring. In Mr. Hoover, we have such a writer. He has arranged to set aside a portion of each day, after his creative work is done, to help clients of the Criticism Bureau with their problems.

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AUTHORS' SERVICE

Box 406, Pa. Ave. Sta., Washington, D. C.

Why We Now Carry No Scenario-School Advertising

(Continued from Page 14)

years offering this service to authors, both amateur and professional. As you are probably aware, a government copyright can only be obtained through publication and distribution, and as we do this in blanket form, we are enabled to offer our clients this copyright service at charges ranging between ten and twenty dollars, depending upon the length of their story. This copyright service would otherwise cost several hundred dollars as the story would have to be printed in book form.

A short time ago a statement was inserted in the daily papers that out of forty thousand manuscripts submitted to the studios, only four were accepted. In the first place this statement is absolutely not true in that we can point out a great many more originals than these figures which were bought by the studios. In the second place, those people who sent their manuscripts to the studios unsolicited, would never have any means of knowing whether or not their idea in some form or other had been used by the studios; whereas had they been copyrighted in accordance with the service we render our clients, their plots would have been entirely safe.

When people like the Authors' League Bulletin print such an article as they did in their September issue, you can readily see from the text therein, that they were extremely cautious not to make any definite statement. The fact of the matter is, that they probably had their own ax to grind inasmuch as it is apparent that they do similar work as we do. As far as refuting their article is concerned, one can not refute anything that is intangible. All we can do is to show you that we are conducting a legitimate copyright business and should, therefore, receive impartial consideration. We are not a school; we have no courses or plans to sell; we promise nothing to our clients that is not definitely fulfilled in the most minute detail; we hold out no false hopes, but emphasize the importance of copyrighting their stories before submitting them to anyone. As our service charge in this respect is very low, we feel that we are of real assistance to both the professional and amateur writer."

Sincerely yours,

The Dake-Johanet Advertising Agency,
C. L. Young.

This may be accepted as an authoritative statement of the purposes of the Universal Scenario Corporation. Our rejection of the advertising, naturally, is based upon the ground that the company offers a perfectly useless service, which it seeks to induce writers to believe is necessary. The service is useless from one angle because the author can obtain practically the same protection through a simple registration of his story, and from another angle because there is no scenario market.

Referring to Mr. Young's letter, we take issue with him in reference to the statement that "this copyright service would otherwise cost several hundred dollars as the story would have to be printed in book form." That is ridiculous. A 750-word or 1000-word synopsis could be printed and copyrighted in pamphlet form for less than \$10. (THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST printing department will engage to do it for this sum at any time—though we certainly do not advise it.) An extended synopsis of several thousand words—which would be much more to the point—could be printed and copyrighted for perhaps \$25 to \$40.

The Authors' League Bulletin article to which reference is made, said in part:

The Authors' League is not alone in its efforts to protect the rights of writers. The Universal Scenario Corporation, of Los Angeles, is so solicitous for them that it publishes a twelve-page book-

let, addressed to authors and would-be authors, and entitled, "Protection, Your Right, Your Duty. A Little Book to Light the Way. Original Plots Are Worth Money." It is sent free to any one who asks for it, and dilates on the danger of submitting scenarios to producers without first protecting them by copyright. This is very dangerous, because—to quote the booklet—

"Every day hundreds of people submit their ideas in writing to motion picture studios thousands of miles away, not knowing that these ideas automatically become the property of the person employed to read them. After ten or more readers at as many studios have read a submitted scenario, there is grave danger that one of them will wake up some morning believing the idea is original with him. Then what is to prevent him using the idea and selling it? Nothing, if the writer has neglected to secure legal evidence of authorship."

Of course, this evidence of authorship may be established through the League by any one, whether a member or not, by the simple expedient of depositing an original copy in the office—which may be done by mail—and the payment of a trifling registration fee. For this the author receives also several printed slips, to be attached to copies of the script submitted to producers, attesting the fact of such registration. But the Universal Scenario Corporation does not appear to have heard of this, or—if it has—ignores it. You are asked to submit your original, unregistered, uncopyrighted idea to the Corporation—whose readers you must assume to be immune to the automatic-suggestion complex that afflicts the readers employed in the studios—and if the idea meets their approval, an immune scenario-writer will put it in proper shape for submission at the rate of two cents a word, ten dollars for a 500-word synopsis; but you are urged not to "err in making your script too short," and doubtless the synopsis-writer will not err in this respect.

Then, without additional charge, the synopsis is printed in a publication issued by the Corporation—of which you receive one copy free, additional copies, one dollar each—and behold—Your synopsis is protected by "a blanket copyright" covering the entire contents. "In verification a transfer certificate of copyright is furnished to each author"—an excellent provision, if carried out. We do not suggest that it will not be carried out; but an author might be excused for asking himself why—when he is warned not to trust any one else in the motion-picture business—he should place so implicit faith in this particular organization.

Observe, however, the advantage to the author in having his synopsis thus printed and protected. A copy of the publication containing it "is sent to the active studio managers, directors, and scenario editors throughout the country, to be placed on file and used by them when selecting new scenarios." Whether it is so placed on file and consulted, is left open; but the suggestion is conveyed to the author of a simultaneous submission of his idea to every producer in the land, and he is permitted to picture them as eagerly competing with one another for the privilege of filming his masterpiece. Nothing is said about the possibility of the synopsis being read by some mentally, impressionable scenario-writer who might automatically adopt the idea as his own on waking up the next morning. The fact that it was copyrighted would not prevent such unconscious appropriation—and might not be a bar to a conscious one. Of course, in either case, if the author happened to see the film based on his original idea, all he would have to do would be to hire a lawyer to sue the producer. But he could do that on the evidence of the prior registration of his idea with the Authors' League.

But suppose you are not an author. Suppose you have no ideas to be put into synopsis form at two cents a word and copyrighted. That need make no difference. The booklet tells you where to get them. You do not have to be "a genius, a wiz," says the booklet; "that idea is the bunk." You merely have to be a plagiarist. Read what it prints under the heading "Plot Sources":

"Look through very old magazines, on which the copyright has long expired. By reading carefully the stories in such publications and adding to them, one might build up a very creditable plot

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Manuscripts revised, typed and marketed. Try our new system, "Learn to Write by Writing."

Submit manuscripts.

No reading fee.

that can be brought down to date by incorporating fresh ideas. Some of the most successful authors of the day are continually digging through old publications for foundations on which to build successful photodramas."

Finally, coming to the statement: "We promise nothing to our clients that is not definitely fulfilled to the last minute detail; we hold out no false hopes," it may be well to examine one of the company's advertisements appearing in a contemporary writers' journal which saw fit to accept the copy. It is headed: "\$\$ for Photoplay Ideas," with an accompanying illustration showing the dollars pouring from the mouth of a sack. Perhaps this means the dollars pouring from misguided scenarists into the pockets of the Universal Scenario Corporation—but we doubt if it is intended that way. The advertisement further reads: "You are just as capable of writing acceptable scenarios as thousands of successful writers. Original plots and ideas are what is wanted. Plots accepted in any form. Revised, criticised, copyrighted, marketed. Advice free." Enough said!

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Limit reading matter on stamp to four lines.

Just the thing to mark outgoing and return envelopes. Gives neatness and accuracy. Daters 35c. Typewriter ribbons, all color for all machines 55c. 2 for \$1. Inking pads, all colors 30c. Catalog free.

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NON-PROFESSIONAL WRITERS!

Appearances count. Have your manuscripts put in proper form by one who understands editorial requirements. I correct, revise and type. My rates are reasonable and I am in a position to ADVISE POSSIBLE MARKETS for your story or photoplay.

N. ROLLER

928 Midland Ave., Syracuse, N. Y.

The Laird Extension Institute

The Laird Extension Institute, which conducts an established school of short-story writing, recently launched a course in photoplay writing which was to be under the direction of John Emerson and Anita Loos. Its advertising featured the "constant and increasing demand for more good photoplays," and the statement that "the producers are scouring the country for good screen material."

Advertisements for this course were suddenly withdrawn and contracts were canceled at about the time the Authors' League report appeared. From this we conjecture that the institute was sincere in its purposes, and changed its plans upon discovering the true situation in the scenario field.

Other Schools

Despite the criticism that has been directed at the better-known schools of scenario-writing and selling agencies, on the score of implications contained in their advertising, there is at least this to be said for them: They have been willing to come out in the open.

As the Authors' League report stated, there are enterprises of this nature operating all over the country, many advertising only through private mailing lists, while others give only a post-office box as a business address. Particularly will their advertisements be found in the classified advertising sections of daily newspapers and cheap magazines. Their pretensions are so rank that they do not dare to advertise in magazines that reach the actual writer. Their prey is the factory girl, the farm hand, and others who know nothing in the world about the subject of writing, and who therefore fall easier prey to glib assertions concerning the immense sums to be made in one branch or another of authorship, and the ease with which it can be done, once the secret has been imparted by Mr. Advertiser—for a consideration.

It will do little good to expose these concerns through THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, unless their operations can actually be brought to a stop by the authorities, because their dupes do not even know there exists such a thing as a trade journal for writers. But in hope that some advance may be made toward ridding the country of the disgusting parasites who prey upon aspiring writers, it is our purpose to publish the true facts in regard to these concerns, as they come into our possession from time to time. We shall try to keep them out of our advertising columns; but we do not claim to be infallible in judgment, and the cooperation of readers is sought in helping us to weed out the unfit.

Readers can all prove of assistance by sending data concerning obviously fraudulent concerns elsewhere offering service to writers.

Clippings Are Welcomed

Some of our readers were so thoughtful as to send us during the past month editorials and other clippings from newspapers based upon our discussion of the photoplay situation. It is probable that the current issue also will provoke newspaper comment in many quarters, and clippings of this type, if sent to us, with name of newspaper and date, will be greatly appreciated.



Why so many writers choose this New Corona

EVERY writer has two big uses for a typewriter. First he wants a machine to produce neat manuscript that will pass exacting editors. Then he wants a typewriter to carry with him. The new Corona is an office typewriter and a portable typewriter in one—exactly what the writer needs.

Portable—Weighing but 7 pounds, this New Corona can be carried everywhere, ready for instant use.

Simple—The New Corona has the standard portable keyboard, with right and left shift-keys, the simplest of all keyboards to operate.

Wider Range of Work—The New Corona has a standard 10-inch carriage (wider than any other portable typewriter). It takes a No. 10 envelope with ease, (the size used for mailing manuscripts).

Durable—Corona is the only portable typewriter with half a million users—the only portable that has been tested under all kinds of service for sixteen consecutive years.

With all its improvements, the price of the New Corona has not been increased. It costs but \$50, complete with case. Mail the coupon for copy of an interesting folder describing it fully.

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Send me your new folder
No. 30 which describes the
New Corona in detail.

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A prominent man wrote recently: "I don't know how such a splendid journal has heretofore escaped me." He was speaking of

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Have you been missing this helpful magazine for those who wield the pen? If so, this is your opportunity.

THE WRITER'S DIGEST stands out prominently as a leader in its field. Each issue is filled with just that information which the writer and everyone interested in writing wants. Biographical sketches of prominent writers—Articles on various phases of the profession—Pertinent discussions by authoritative writers—A carefully compiled literary Market—Book Review—and many other interesting features appear in the table of contents.

Send today for a **FREE** sample copy

If you write or want to write, you will appreciate every issue of this magazine. Won't you let us prove our claims?

THE WRITER'S DIGEST

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Cincinnati, Ohio

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In response to many requests by those employing *The Author & Journalist* criticism service and by others, *The Author & Journalist* has established a reliable

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Each manuscript submitted to the agency must be accompanied by a reading fee of \$1.00 for the first 5000 words, 20 cents for each thousand words additional.

In offering this service we do not claim to have any mysterious influence with editors nor do we guarantee the sale of a manuscript. We do have a closer knowledge of the immediate market needs than most writers. We guarantee only to devote honest and intelligent effort to selling manuscripts accepted for that purpose, as promptly as possible.

The reading fee entitles the writer to a brief criticism of his manuscript if it is not accepted for marketing. This service will attempt to market only short-stories, novels and articles which are considered likely to sell. For selling a manuscript 15 per cent of the amount paid by the magazine is charged; minimum commission, \$3.00.

The service is open to non-subscribers as well as subscribers. Address:

AGENCY DEPARTMENT. *The Author & Journalist*, 1835 Champa St., Denver, Colo.

The Literary Market

(Continued from Page 2)

Farm and Fireside, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, George Martin, editor, is now practically a closed market for free-lance material, as it has a full staff of home-office writers, and in addition "field editors" in various localities over the country, so that nothing is used from outsiders except a small item now and then treating of something unique in the farming line, 100 to 200 words.

Christian Philosophical Journal, Pacific Building, Oakland, Calif., Eda Colvin White, editor, writes: "We have received many manuscripts from the readers of your magazine. Due to the large number on hand, we shall not be in the market again for material until further notice."

Poet Lore, 194 Boylston Street, Boston, offered as payment for all rights for submitted plays, six copies of the issue of the magazine containing them, according to *The Author* (England), which advises all authors to reject such a contract. The offer was made on note-paper of Richard C. Badger, publisher, 100 Charles Street, Boston.

Young Men and Young Women, Uthai Vincent Wilcox, editor, Takoma Park, Washington, D. C., is a new market, using technical articles along religious-philosophical lines, 1000 to 2500 words in length, some verse and fillers. Payment is on publication. The General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists are the publishers. The General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists issue two books each year for primary ages, three for junior ages, and four for older young people, for which manuscripts are sought. Address Uthai Vincent Wilcox, book and periodical editor.

Fur News & Outdoor World, 370 Seventh Avenue, New York, Paul Belden, editor, desires stories and articles on hunting, trapping, fishing and about hunting dogs. All longer articles must be accompanied by photos. Short ones, or "letters" may be submitted minus pictures, unless referring to "how to do it" matters, when a rough drawing should accompany letter. Contributors have received payment at about one cent a word on acceptance.

Acc-High Magazine, 799 Broadway, New York, Harold Hersey, editor, writes: "We have discontinued our 'Thrilling Experience Department' and cannot consider further manuscripts for it."

Science and Invention, 53 Park Place, New York, according to a contributor, paid \$25 for a 5000-word article used in a recent issue, instead of 1 to 2 cents a word as formerly listed in the Handy Market List.

Oil Field Engineering, Chicago, has been discontinued, following the death of its owner.

The Guild Pioneer, 9 Charles Street, New York, has suspended publication. Complaints have been received at this office that it holds not only subscribers' money obtained for subscriptions and memberships in the "Pioneer Writers' Guild," but also manuscripts submitted in its various contests.

General Newspaper Syndicate, P. O. Box 694, San Francisco, Calif., J. W. Florence, business manager, writes: "It may interest your readers to know we will be in the market for brief manuscripts suitable for newspaper syndicating. Articles of interest to the general public, women, travel, some verse of humorous character, and a few jokes, will be used. No photographs, serials, short-stories, religious articles, or articles of a radical or political nature desired. We are a new firm in the process of organization. Our prices paid may be somewhat less than those paid by some of the older firms. We are, however, seeking the work of new authors."

The Chauffeur, 239 W. Thirtieth Street, New York, Treve Collins, associate editor, writes: "For the present *The Chauffeur* will pay a cent a word for fiction and prose miscellany, twenty-five cents a line for verse, on acceptance. The rates will be bettered as soon as is warranted." *The Chauffeur* is announced as a national magazine for the professional driver.

Alexander Markey, editor of *Pearson's Magazine*, 157 E. Ohio Street, Chicago, writes: "I can use the very highest class short stories, poems, essays, articles on social, economic and political problems—both domestic and international—and also book reviews. The material that usually goes into the average standardized magazine has very little, if any, chance in *Pearson's*. I am interested only in the unusual and genuinely artistic. The price we pay at present is \$6.00 per magazine page (about 900 words), except where special arrangement is made with the author. Payment is made upon publication. I am striving to make *Pearson's* an intellectual companion of the great body of thinking Americans; a medium of the highest social and political ideals; a magazine of international reconciliation, and of all that is best in the world of literature. It may interest you to know that Mr. Edward J. O'Brien, editor of 'The Best Short Stories of the Year,' wrote me a few days ago as follows: 'May I congratulate you on your splendid showing for 1923? *Pearson's Magazine* very nearly heads my list.' I want to take this opportunity to congratulate you upon the new style of your magazine and send you my best wishes for a real success."

The Colo Roto Magazine, to be issued soon after the first of the year by the publishers of *The Chicago Tribune* and the *New York Daily News*, "will be as unique in the national field as the *News* is among the New York newspapers," according to Col. Robert R. McCormick and Captain J. M. Patterson, co-editors of the *Chicago Tribune*. "It is not practical to try to describe what the magazine will be like. It will have to speak for itself. It will be unique in being the only color roto magazine in the world, and we will endeavor to make it unique in several respects."

Brentano's, Fifth Avenue and Twenty-seventh Street, New York, are reported to have in contemplation the publication of a monthly magazine dealing with books, the theater, politics, sport and gossip. "and all which appeals to idle and sportive pens." It will be known as *Brentano's Magazine* and probably will be largely staff-written.

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Dr. Richard
Burton

Learn to write stories that sell. Dr. Richard Burton, "greatest authority of them all," will teach you by mail. Also offers Revision and Criticism service. His students have made thousands from their stories—one nearly \$100,000. Story-writing is fascinating side-line offering more money, prestige and advancement, if you know the secrets and methods of successful writing. This is a real training course, with individual criticism of each lesson. You may have ideas and ability that will bring you fame and fortune. Find out. Send today for Free Book, "Short-Story Writing," Profit Sharing Plan, and special low rate.

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All manuscripts are given Mr. Hardy's personal attention. Send for full information.

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ADDRESSES AND ORATIONS

prepared for speakers, club women and others by a writer who was formerly one of the editors of the *World To-Day*. Also research work done. Estimates furnished.

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"THE WRITER" is the only English magazine of its kind. It gives all the English Markets for your work, and up-to-date information about the British Press. Also a great deal of inside information for those who want to get into the English market. 30 cents monthly, post free. *Abbey House, Westminster, England.*

THE S. T. C. NEWS

A page of Comment and Gossip About
the Simplified Training Course and
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VOL. I, No. 1

JANUARY, 1924.

EDITED BY DAVID RAFFLOCK

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Apropos this subject is a very interesting letter from E. L. Scofield, Pinehurst, N. C., who has been doing some personal investigating in Hollywood.

"Enclosed you will please find an enrollment blank duly filled out and also my check for \$40 in full payment for your Simplified Training Course in Short Story Writing.

"I have written photoplay scenarios off and on during the past ten years, of which I have sold several, but after two months in Hollywood carefully looking over the situation, I have come to the conclusion that the best way to write for the screen is not to write for it at all, but to write fiction. Once your name has become known as a successful writer of fiction, the motion picture producers will come to you and pay many times over what they would have paid for your original manuscript before you arrived."

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When I was in New York recently I talked with many editors, writers and educators. Most of them believe firmly in the necessity of technique. A technical knowledge of the short-story will not make a successful writer, but it will help any writer, no matter how he may be equipped by nature. This was the consensus of opinion and so I still retain my conviction that the Simplified Training Course is a force in modern literature that will help produce artists as well as mere journalists.

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Miss Lila M. Murray of San Francisco, S. T. C. student, has been having an interesting experience in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The South American city has been called the Paris of that continent, but Miss Murray differs strongly with this conventional opinion. The romance of other countries often lies mainly in travellers' imaginations, Miss Murray says.

Dependable!

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Writers *cannot be made*; but they can be trained and encouraged. Those familiar with the subject know that where one writer may succeed in making \$600 a week, this cannot be reasonably expected by another of less ability.

We want serious, earnest students who are willing to study and work in order to develop what ability they have. It is not and never has been our aim to lure ambitious persons into a course of study by holding out to view examples of fortunes to be made by writing.

Everyone knows that Booth Tarkington, Mary Roberts Rinehart, and leading authors of like caliber are paid enormous sums for their stories and that many other writers who contribute to the popular magazines make good incomes. But these authors did not secure the "passport to Prosperity" by the imparting of some mysterious "secret" which showed "how easy it is when you know how." Bricklayers, housekeepers, and clerks are not converted into authors merely by instruction, though an authoritative course such as the S. T. C. will *bring out* their ability, if they have any.

No course of instruction can do more than give one the technical equipment necessary

for writing and by competent training develop the ability one may possess.

This, we emphatically assert, THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST'S SIMPLIFIED TRAINING COURSE IN SHORT-STORY WRITING is prepared to do. We are firmly convinced that it offers the best training in short-story writing to be obtained anywhere.

Our students testify that the S. T. C. teaches short-story technique comprehensively, that the close personal supervision of a sympathetic instructor instills confidence into them and that the study does equip them for a success within the scope of their ability.

Could any course honestly claim to do more?

Dependability and sincere, capable instruction are assured to the students of the SIMPLIFIED TRAINING COURSE. We have prepared a booklet, "Short-Story Technique

by the New Method." It is not a flashy catalogue filled with vague generalities and alluring accounts of fame and fortune attained by big writers. Its one purpose is to show you how we teach short-story writing. It contains numerous sample pages from the regular instruction material, including a number of the interesting and valuable assignments. Just mail the coupon below.

A Statement

The Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing was planned and written by Willard E. Hawkins, editor, and David Raffelock, associate editor, of THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST, and is the fruit of many years of practical connection with editors and writers as well as students. At no time have we in our advertisements or otherwise made claims that we cannot fulfill to the greatest extent. S. T. C. advertisements have painstakingly avoided the usual "hokum" appeals. We sincerely believe that the S. T. C. will give the writer the technical equipment necessary for success; it is our conviction that a study of the course will bring out the ability the student may possess. We have simplified the technique which the student must learn and have yet made the course thorough and comprehensive. Such writers, editors and educators as H. Bedford-Jones, Arthur Preston Hankins, Harry Stephen Keeler, Julian Kilman, Lemuel DeBra, Graves Glenwood Clark and many others have written substantial endorsements of the S. T. C.

THE AUTHOR & JOURNALIST,
1835 Champa Street, Denver, Colo.

Please send me, without obligation on my part, your free booklet, "Short-Story Technique by the New Method," and full information about the Simplified Training Course in Short-Story Writing.

Name

Address

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Writers *cannot be made*; but they can be trained and encouraged. Those familiar with the subject know that where one writer may succeed in making \$600 a week, this cannot be reasonably expected by another of less ability.

We want serious, earnest students who are willing to study and work in order to develop what ability they have. It is not and never has been our aim to lure ambitious persons into a course of study by holding out to view examples of fortunes to be made by writing.

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Dance Lover's Magazine, one of the Macfadden group, 1926 Broadway, New York, Lee Brown, managing editor, writes: "We desire articles on dancing and dancers within 2000 words and short-stories with a relevant theme from 1500 to 4500 words in length. Serials, editorials, verse, jokes, etc., not wanted. Material must be such as pertains to dancing, either ballroom, classic, stage, interpretive, etc., 'only this and nothing more.' Payment is made on acceptance." Mr. Brown does not state what rates are paid.

Dale R. Van Horn, Walton, Nebr., writes: "Wanted—Unpublished photos of many descriptions such as freaks, curios, labor-saving devices, new inventions, farm views, if they depict buildings or improvements rather than merely rural scenes, summer and winter sport devices, etc. From fifty cents to several dollars paid upon acceptance, but in each case names or addresses or both, together with necessary data, must be included, as well as postage for those unavailable. In some cases the negative will be required, but usually not. I would like to get in touch with photographers who can furnish pictures regularly. Those who 'deliver' will be in line for an occasional assignment. Only photos which have not been published are wanted. More than 1500 photos will be needed in 1924."

Roscoe Fawcett, associate editor of the Fawcett Publications, Robbinsdale, Minn., writes: "In your December issue we note a slight error in reference to *True Confessions Magazine* and would take it as a very great favor if you will correct it. The text reads: 'Manuscripts should be in the first person and from 7000 words up.' What we wanted to say, but evidently did not, was that manuscripts should be from 1500 to 7500 words. Will you have space for the following notice? *True Confessions Magazine* wishes to announce that it is stocked up for several months to come with tabloid confessions suitable for its 'Woman and Her Experience' page, but is still in the market for good, strong, first-person confessions of love, mystery and adventure. Love stories should center around an attractive, well-worked-out sex interest with due regard to stark truth. Manuscripts from 1500 to 7500 words preferred. Payment of 2 cents a word minimum rate made immediately upon acceptance."

The Hallwill Newspaper Service, suite 907 Bosch building, 17-23 Sixtieth Street, New York, is in the market for short tales from 150 to 500 words for its "Odd Tales From Human Life." Payment will be made at from 1 to 5 cents a word, according to material submitted. Each month a prize of from \$50 to \$100 will be awarded to the contributor having sent the best contributions during the month. Tales such as that of a dog who mothers a brood of kittens; a man who, digging in his back yard, finds a ring his wife had lost years ago, and the like, are wanted; fact, not fiction.

The American Luther Association Informer, Eleventh and State Streets, Milwaukee, Wis., Oscar W. Ristau, editor, desires short-stories with adventure, travel, or mystery themes, of from 1500 to 3000 words. It also uses poems with a nature theme, of from twenty to thirty lines. The rate of payment is about ¼ cent a word. Exceptionally well-written essays are also used occasionally.

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IN WRITING TO ADVERTISERS, MENTION
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Carl Easton Williams, editor of *Strength Magazine*, 104 Fifth Avenue, New York, writes: "I would like to say that contributions offered for publication in *Strength* should aim, not merely to present knowledge, but should, so far as possible, prove stimulating in spirit. Most material is received of a kind that is naturally available so far as subject matter is concerned, but which is not written in such a way as to take hold of the reader's imagination. We are compelled to return articles on what would seem to be available subjects, because of the lack of color or inspiration in the writing style of the author. Indeed, this is the consideration to be emphasized. The important factor is the spirit of the story, or the spirit of the picture, or the spirit of the magazine. If a story has this quality of vitality, colored with imagination, so as to make it human rather than academic, then a manuscript on almost any subject in our field will be available. In other words, it is largely a matter of the art of writing, which requires not a grammatical sequence of words, but a certain quality of human life which gives a story or an article personality, so to speak. To realize this would undoubtedly help a writer in conjunction with doing work for a magazine other than *Strength*."

Action Stories, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York, J. B. Kelly, editor, recently stated to a contributor it was "out of the market excepting for 15,000-word novelets."

Youth Perpetual, 242 W. Forty-ninth Street, New York, is announced as a new magazine by C. Grand Pierre, who states that articles on various subjects, mysticism apparently being favored, will be purchased at low rates.

Dogs, In Words and Pictures, 26-30 Bleecker Street, New York, appears to have gone out of existence.

Arkay Feature Service, Broad and Gallatin Streets, James W. Rhodes, managing editor, writes: "After a period of difficult financial reorganization the Arkay is back in the running and prepared to give better service and pay higher rates than ever before. It will be well for contributors to write us before sending us material, that we may advise them as to our immediate needs."

The Coleman Lamp Company, Wichita, Kans., which was reported in our November issue to offer a bonus for articles which writers have succeeded in getting published in farm or other journals, denies that it has made such an offer. Our authority for publishing the statement was a letter to a contributor in which Karl E. Kilby, advertising manager, stated that such an arrangement had been made with one writer and in which he offered to make a similar arrangement with another.

Captain Joey's Follies, Joseph Burton, editor, 44 Greenwich Avenue, Greenwich Village, New York, wants "true confessions," not to exceed 250 words each, promising to pay \$5 each for all acceptable. He states that names of writers will not be given, unless otherwise requested. The same publication also offers a prize of \$25 for the "best set of lyrics for an anti blue-law song."

The Haversack is a teen-age boys' paper, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. "We are in need of short-stories of 2200 to 3000 words in length. We desire to have clean sportsmanship and high principles of conduct stressed through the medium of the plot itself rather than by moralistic and didactic phrases and 'too-good-to-be-true' characterizations. We are also in the market for serials of six to eight chapters. We pay on acceptance and usually report within two weeks," writes Edwin B. Chappell, Jr., assistant editor.

McNaught's Monthly, Times Building, New York, V. V. McNitt, editor and publisher, appeared in December. According to an editorial statement, "Contributors will be urged to avoid formality, and to give us the essence of their views and conclusions in brief, well-rounded, and stimulating form. In a word, we hope to make the new review as lively and inspiring, and as agreeable to read, as a good story magazine. Contributors are requested to bear in mind that we wish all our articles to be short and stimulating, rather than long and sedate." Rates and methods of payment not yet at hand.

Town Life, Columbus, Ohio, writes that it is using only material of local nature, with the exception of one short feature story.

Popular Radio, 9 E. Fortieth Street, New York, has been reported as slow in payment by several correspondents of recent date. Similar complaints have been made concerning *Snappy Stories* and *Live Stories*, issued by the same company.

Prize Contests

(Continued from Page 3)

McFerrin's Health Bulletin, Capitol Building, Chicago, Arthur W. Scott, business manager, writes that he is extending the time limit of the prize contest announced by that publication to February 15, and that entrants must first write for details of contest and rules governing it, before their contributions will be honored.

The Atlanta (Georgia) Sunday American awards a prize of \$10 every week for short-stories of 1500 words or less. Details and rules may be obtained from Adelaide Howell Bower, editor, care of the newspaper.

The Philadelphia Sunday Record, 917 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa., awards three weekly prizes of \$2.50, \$2.00 and \$1.50 for picture story answers. For its children's pages it buys brief fables, verses about nature and pen and ink sketches of animals and birds. For its woman's page it purchases household hints, recipes and brief articles on the home worker. Timely specials, photographs and illustrations are used in the rest of the magazine, which now contains sixteen pages, being an enlargement on the former Sunday supplement.

Leighton's Magazine, 244 Flood Building, San Francisco, offers \$5 each month for the best account in not more than 500 words, of ways in which the practice of true co-operation have resulted in increased prosperity. The right is reserved to publish other stories submitted, for which only \$1 will be paid.

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